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RECOLLECTIONS OF BRITISH
ADMINISTRATION IN THE
CAMEROONS AND NORTHERN
NIGERIA 1921-1957: "BUT
ALWAYS AS FRIENDS"

Sir Bryan Sharwood-Smith

K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., K.B.E., E.D., formerly
Governor of the Northern Region of Nigeria

"We are grateful to the British officers whom we have known, first as masters and then as leaders and, finally, as partners but always as friends"

The late the Rt. Hon. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa K.B.E., P.C., Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria, when paying tribute to the British Colonial Service on Independence Day, Oct. 1, 1960.

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TO MY WIFE

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Several years have passed since I began to record the impressions and to assemble the facts on which this book is based. During those years, many friends and former colleagues have given generously of their time in checking points of detail and in advising on matters of substance. Prominent among them, Hedley Marshall, C.M.G., Q.C., former Attorney General of the Northern Region of Nigeria, and Douglas Pott, O.B.E., formerly Permanent Secretary to the Northern Ministry of Local Government, who scrutinized the original script, Rowland Hudson, C.M.G., at that time head of the African Studies Branch of the Colonial Office, who came to my help many times when the need for research arose, and Tony Shillingford, C.B.E., former Inspector General of Education, Nigeria, to whom I owe the appendix on education in the North and memories of old Bornu. For advice in a wider field I have several times been indebted to Mrs. Elspeth Huxley, C.B.E., and David Williams of *West Africa*. In the course, too, of frequent visits to the Commonwealth Relations Office and Colonial Office libraries I have always received every help from the Librarian, Mr. B. Cheeseman, O.B.E., and the staff of both libraries. But, beyond all others, my tribute must be paid to my wife. Had it not been for her constant encouragement and help in innumerable ways this story of Nigeria could never have been told.

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FOREWORD

On January 16, 1966, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria, died at the hands of army mutineers. And with his death, and that of others killed that day, the most far-reaching experiment in parliamentary democracy ever to be undertaken in tropical Africa collapsed in ruin, to be replaced by military government.

The purpose of this book is to tell the story of that great experiment and of the years that led up to it, as seen through the eyes of one who served in Nigeria from shortly after the First World War right through to the brink of self-government.

Mine is, inevitably, a personal story. But it is also the story of a service. For the first twenty years or so, my experiences could well have been those of any one of many young men who went out to Northern Nigeria in the early twenties as Assistant District Officers. These were the lean years when revenues were short and progress slow. In the later years, when time alone was short, as independence loomed ahead, individual roles changed. But for all of us, there was the unforgettable experience of a relationship with the peoples among whom we served which was perhaps unique in African colonial history.

In a book of this nature, that covers so wide a span of years, it is impossible to do more than touch upon many important aspects of the Nigerian scene, past and present. Scholars and students have their own sources of information. This book, however, is intended also for the general reader; for any of these who may wish to study the Nigerian story in greater depth, I have the following suggestions.

In the first place, among the many myths exploded in recent years is the belief that Africa south of the Sahara has no history and that the first Europeans came shedding light where, always, there had been darkness. Such is far from being the case, as Basil Davidson's fascinating work *The African Past* will clearly show. Nearer modern times come Thomas Lionel Hodgkin's *Nigerian Perspectives* and A. H. M. Kirk-Greene's *Barth's Travels in Nigeria*. Next, covering the early years of the British occupation, Dame Margery Perham's classic, *Lugard: The Years of Authority*, and, in lighter vein, Constance Larymore's *A Resident's Wife in Nigeria* and A. C. G. Hastings' reminiscences of *Nigerian Days*. Moving still further toward the present, Kalu Ezeru's *Constitutional Development in Nigeria* records the complex political changes that took place during the years that led up to independence, an event that ushered in a flood of works, some

One of the more recent and more outstanding among the former important, others marred by bias and inaccuracy.

is Professor John P. Mackintosh's monumental *Nigerian Government and Politics*. This book covers, in full detail, Nigeria's constitutional development, the nature and the activities of the various political parties, the attitudes of the electorate, and the sequence of events during the first five years after independence. It also contains some account of the political maneuvering, corruption, and outright thug-gery that were to lead directly to the death of a great patriot and statesman and to the tragedies that were to follow.

BRYAN SHARWOOD SMITH

Bexhill-on-Sea
December, 1967

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations and Maps xi

Introduction xiii

ONE. "FIRST AS MASTERS"

1. In the Shadow of the Forest [1921-1924] 3

2. Talking Drums [1924-1927] 22

TWO. "THEN AS LEADERS"

3. The Savannah Kingdoms and the Fulani Empire
[1000-1900] 39

4. Sokoto in the Twenties [1927-1929] 48

5. Argungu, Last Stronghold of Kebbi [1929-1931] 68

6. Emir Usumanu of Gwandu [1931-1934] 86

7. Muslim Chiefs and Pagan Subjects [1933-1936] 100

8. Sokoto under the New Order [1936-1938] 107

9. The Niger Valley [1938-1939] 116

10. The War Years [1939-1944] 121

11. The Northern Awakening [1944-1947] 151

12. Penalties of Isolation [1948-1950] 173

13. A City in Ferment [1950-1951] 200

THREE. "FINALLY AS PARTNERS"

14. The Ministers Move In [1952-1954] 231

15. Chiefs in a Changing World [1952-1953] 240

16. The Breakdown of the Constitution [1953-1954] 258

17. Nigeria a Federation [1954-1955]	291
18. Chiefs and Politicians in Conflict [1955-1956]	303
19. The Coming of the Queen [1956]	316
20. Seeds of Dissension [1956]	326
21. The "Middle Belt" Controversy [1956]	332
22. The "Twelve Pillars" Policy and the "New Model" District Officer [1956-1957]	347
23. Constitutional Troubles East of the Niger [1956-1957]	356
24. Lancaster House [1957]	362
25. Muslims and Non-Muslims and the Law [1957]	369
25. Time to Go [1957]	374

EPILOGUE

<i>One.</i> [1958-1965]	389
<i>Two.</i> [1966-1967]	398
<i>Three.</i> L'Envoi	405

<i>Appendix 1.</i> Native Administrations of Northern Nigeria in the Twenties and Thirties	415
<i>Appendix 2.</i> Nigeria, 1920-1951: Administrative Organization	417
<i>Appendix 3.</i> Constitutional Changes in Nigeria 1946-1957 as They Affected the Northern Region	418
<i>Appendix 4.</i> Guide to Pronunciation and Glossary	426
<i>Appendix 5.</i> Notes on Personalities	431
<i>Appendix 6.</i> Education in Northern Nigeria	437
Index	442

ILLUSTRATIONS

(following page 302)

1. The author's bush house at Mamfe, 1921
2. The author, Bamenda, 1924
3. Training drive for apprentice drivers, 1927
4. Regional Ministers, Kaduna Railway Station, 1952
5. Muhammedu Sanusi, Emir of Kano, 1954
6. Abubakar Imam
7. Sardauna's guest at an evening reception
8. The Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, and Sir Bryan Sharwood Smith, 1954
9. Government House, Kaduna
10. Royal Visit, 1956
11. The Emir of Kano, Mr. Alan Lennox Boyd, and Lady Patricia Lennox Boyd, Kano, 1957
12. Lady Sharwood Smith, Sir John Patterson, Sir Eric Thompstone, and Sir Bryan Sharwood Smith, 1959
13. Sir Bryan and Lady Sharwood Smith with the Sultan of Sokoto
14. Lady Sharwood Smith, Regional president of the Red Cross
15. K. P. Maddocks with Isa Kaita, Makaman Bida, and Sardauna
16. Hedley Marshall and Sir Kashim Ibrahim, 1962
17. Kano
18. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa greets Prime Minister Harold Macmillan
19. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Princess Alexandra, 1960

MAPS

(following commentary and table of native administrations, pages 411-414)

Nigeria in 1900

Cameroons Province: Early 1920's

Fulani Empire: Mid-19th Century

Sokoto Province: Early 1930's

Nigeria: The Northern Region in the Mid-1950's

INTRODUCTION

At precisely seven o'clock on the morning of January 1, 1900, a spare soldierly figure strode onto a dusty parade ground overlooking the River Niger. Awaiting him, drawn up in a hollow square, were a battalion of the newly raised West African Frontier Force and a contingent of the Royal Niger Constabulary, each flanked by a battery of artillery. From the flagstaff at the saluting base there flew, for the last time, the flag of the Royal Niger Company, which for the previous fourteen years had exercised control over both waterways from the sea to points many hundreds of miles inland. Lokoja, the setting for the events now to be described, was the company's northern headquarters.

As soon as the principal actor in the forthcoming ceremony, the future Lord Lugard, High Commissioner designate, had taken up his position at the foot of the flagstaff, he began to read, in the name of the Queen, a proclamation announcing the revocation of the company's charter and the establishment of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. When he had finished reading, the company's flag, with its proud legend, "Ars, Jus, Pax," was slowly hauled down and, to the thunder of guns and the strains of the national anthem, the Union Jack was run up in its place.

In this manner, with such formality as circumstances permitted, Great Britain assumed responsibility for a territory three times her own size, barely a twentieth of which had been explored. A territory, too, with a population of many millions, only a few score thousand of whom could have known that the old order was at an end and that a new order had begun in which slave-raiding, pillage, and arson, and all the other ills to which they had been subjected, would have no part.

Yet, within sixty years, these unknown millions, together with the peoples of the sister Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, also proclaimed that day, were to be united, and on October 1, 1960, it would be the Union Jack that would be lowered to be replaced

by the green and white flag of a sovereign, independent Nigeria.

But on that January day in 1900, dreams of an independent Nigeria were a part of a yet unimagined future as Lord Lugard and his tiny band of soldiers and administrators faced the stark realities of the task that confronted them. The Royal Niger Company, thanks to the leadership of its creator, Sir George Goldie, without whose vision and determination there would never have been a Nigeria, had established trading posts at many points on the Niger and the Benue above Lokoja. It had also recently subdued the neighboring slave-raiding Emirates of Bida and Ilorin. Now Ilorin alone was quiescent, and north of the Niger-Benue line and south of the Benue there lay a sprawling medley of Muslim emirates, pagan chiefdoms, and primitive hill and forest communities, most of which shared one thing alone in common, hostility toward their neighbors, and a deep disinclination for change.

It was to take five years before a term had been set to slave-raiding and intertribal warfare. By this time the main centers of the new protectorate had been occupied, and a skeleton administration had been brought into being. Next came the first railways and roads, the first hospitals and, largely thanks to the Christian missions, the first schools. By 1914 the foundations had been firmly and skilfully laid. The pioneering era was all but over, and the two protectorates, renamed the Northern and Southern Provinces, were united under a single administration.

The next phase began at the end of the First World War with an influx of British administrators and professional officers now more than ever needed to swell the ranks of a heavily depleted Civil Service. And it was at this point that my personal fortunes and the fortunes of Nigeria became linked.

That this should be so was far more a matter of chance than firm intention, for from boyhood my heart had been set on service in India. Enchanted, while still young, by Kipling's *Kim*, I had begun to experiment with other authors who drew their inspiration from that eternally fascinating country. Soon my interest became almost an obsession, and I eagerly devoured every book on which I could lay my hands which was in any way connected with India and its peoples. Most of all it was the fabled

North West Frontier, and what lay beyond, that attracted me. The road there, I knew, would be hard and long, but I laid my plans. A commission in a Frontier Regiment would be the first step, a transfer to the Indian Political Service my goal.

Many years later, when I was twenty, the Afghan War of 1919 took me to the North West Frontier and to within an ace of fulfilling my ambition. However, it was not to be. Another land awaited me, a land in many ways not unlike northern India, the Northern Nigeria that was to be my home for so many years.

I was born in 1899, in Hull. My father, the son of a parson, was, at that time, senior classics master at Hymers College. Here he met my mother, herself the daughter of a local vicar. My father's views on education were forceful and unorthodox. His first teaching post had been at Cheam and from there he had moved to Shrewsbury. He ended as headmaster of a country grammar school at Newbury in Berkshire where, after many years of struggle against apathy and discouragement, he found fulfilment. After he retired he wrote a book, *The Faith of a Schoolmaster*, which attracted considerable attention at the time. It was in accordance with this faith that the foundations of my own education were laid.

It was from my father, at a very early age, that I learned the love of reading. Indeed, it was the color, the movement and romance of Scott's historical novels that, in the first place, fired my imagination and led, eventually, to a determination to pass my days amongst far-off peoples in distant, sunlit lands.

A term before my fifteenth birthday I left my father's school for Aldenham, in Hertfordshire. I was placed in the school house. This had, from my father's point of view, the advantage of being under the headmaster's personal supervision, for he had a great admiration for W. H. Cooke, then widely acknowledged to be one of the great headmasters of his time.

In my day Aldenham was tough rather than rough, but there was an all pervading austerity from which there was no escape. A great deal of authority was vested in the praeposters, and the atmosphere of the house depended a very great deal on their quality and their readiness to accept responsibility.

The First World War broke out after I had been there a year.

Apart from an ever increasing emphasis on military training, our daily lives were not at first affected. But as the months passed and casualties mounted, we learned, by personal loss, that there was another side to the romanticized outlook on war which persisted among the young idealists that most of us then were. Stories of the mud and blood of the Ypres Salient and the Somme began to drive home the grim truth. The names of boys who had laughingly waved good bye only two terms' ending before began to appear in the casualty lists, all too many under the headings "Killed" or "Missing."

During my last year I was a school praeposter and in the upper sixth. Cooke, a remote and somewhat eccentric, though awe inspiring, figure to younger boys, possessed the respect and affection of his sixth form. I can still see, as though yesterday, his tall ungainly frame in dingy black, his white clerical tie, his high-domed forehead with its wispy hair, his pale blue eyes behind their pebble glasses, eyes which could be disconcertingly sharp, as many an unwary boy was to discover.

By the indirectness of his approach, and by the degree to which we were encouraged to work "in our own time," he taught us independence in word and deed. Thanks to his personal teaching and to the foundations laid by my father, I was awarded an Open Classical Scholarship at Cambridge a little before my eighteenth birthday, and with this bridge into the future safely crossed, I made ready to exchange my black school uniform for the double-breasted khaki of the Royal Flying Corps.

Three years later, after serving first in France and then in India, I came home to be demobilized. My father hoped that I would now take up my scholarship at Cambridge, but the call of distant places was still too strong, and I applied for a post in the Colonial Service. All that an applicant then needed in the first place was an acceptable educational background and five testimonials to character from former headmasters and commanding officers. Should the picture evoked by these testimonials, once checked, be favorable, the candidate was summoned to London for an interview. This interview was conducted by a Major R. D. Furse, a lean, quiet-spoken ex-cavalry man, with a double D.S.O., of whom, as Sir Ralph Furse, it was later to be written, "More

than any single man he *made* the [Colonial Service] and is deservedly spoken of as its father."¹ I certainly remember clearly the dingy slit of a room in the Colonial Office where the interview took place and some of the questions that were asked, though it was not till much later that the full impact of Furse's inspiring personality took effect.

Among the principal criteria for appointment were ability to sustain long periods of service in isolated and unhealthy stations and readiness to assume responsibility in unexpected, and possibly unnerving, situations. The reasons for this were, before long, to become only too obvious to me, but at the time, all that mattered was that I was accepted and given instructions to report for a three-months course of lectures at the Imperial Institute in South Kensington, as a preliminary to appointment to Nigeria.

This course, which was designed to impart the elements of what would be required of us when we took up our appointments, was attended by some fifty recently demobilized officers like myself, all destined for various parts of Africa. The principal subjects were accounting, English and Muslim law, tropical hygiene, tropical agriculture, surveying, and anthropology. Our lecturers were all eminent men at the summit of their professions, but I fear we did not afford them the attention they merited. Most of us had but recently returned from places like Mesopotamia, Palestine, Salonika, and South Russia. Our minds, in consequence, were prone to wander in the direction of theaterland and the world of little restaurants in Soho, for our thirst for such diversions was still unslaked.

By mid-December our course ended, and with my departure from Liverpool on the twenty-ninth of the month, my colonial service had begun.

1. Robert Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers* (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 14.

ONE

“FIRST AS MASTERS”

Chapter 1

IN THE SHADOW OF THE FOREST

1921-1924

I

To many of us who stood on the promenade deck of the little mail steamer that January morning of 1921, it scarcely seemed possible that the port of Lagos, our present destination, lay only a few miles away. We were fourteen days out of Liverpool and were due to dock within an hour or so. Yet on the horizon nothing was visible but the occasional flash of a breaking wave. Then suddenly, away to the northward, the flashes became more frequent until a continuous line of white showed where the Atlantic breakers pounded on a narrow ridge of sand. And beyond the sand, under a lowering sky, the smudgy outline of a belt of woodland dominated by a clump of trees, taller than the rest, which gradually took individual shape as we altered course toward them. To those who had passed this way before, this isolated group of casuarinas marked the entrance to the lagoon on whose shores stood the capital city of Nigeria and its main gateway to the interior where most of us were bound.

Within the half-hour we had steamed between the protruding arms of the twin moles that guard the entrance to the harbor and were slipping swiftly through the calm waters of the lagoon beyond. On the port side lay mangrove swamps and tangled undergrowth, over much of which, within a few years, would be erected the vast Apapa docks. To starboard stood a line of red-roofed bungalows and, towering above them, the massive white bulk of Government House in its shady garden, the Union Jack flying high overhead on a giant flagstaff. Next in line the red brick Secretariat and lesser offices, then the waterfront with its shops and

warehouses and, finally, the customs wharf at which we were to disembark.

When I first knew it, Lagos had been a British colony for nearly sixty years. For more than half a century previously, the Royal Navy had harried the slavers whose ships infested the lagoons and waterways far along the coast to the east and west. Lagos was their last major stronghold. In 1851 it was attacked by British men-of-war and captured. And as those who had taken part in the storming watched the smoke rising from the burning barracoons in which the Portuguese slavers had held their unhappy captives, they were witnessing the final act in the long struggle to suppress an infamous traffic that had brought profit to many and credit to none.

Eleven years later Lagos was annexed to the British Crown, and from that day onward it grew in size and importance until, in 1906, together with its immediate hinterland, it became amalgamated with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, which had been established six years previously. Northern Nigeria had been proclaimed a protectorate in the same year. Eight years later, in 1914, Northern and Southern Nigeria, renamed the Northern and Southern Provinces, were united, with Lagos as the capital of the entire territory.

On the night of my arrival I was lodged—together with the sixty odd tin uniform cases, hessian-covered bales, wooden crates, and boxes of provisions which had accompanied me—in a small room in Bajulaye's Rest House. This rambling, double-storied building, named after its manager and presiding genius, overlooked the race course.

At that time, and for many years afterward, only simple groceries and a few articles of equipment could be bought outside Lagos, and these were often of poor quality and carelessly packaged. It was more satisfactory, in every way, for British officials serving upcountry to bring out their requirements in bulk, using as their agents and suppliers one of the small group of firms which specialized in such matters.

I had asked in London if I might be posted to the Northern Provinces of Nigeria rather than to the South. The North seemed to me to resemble far more closely the northern India that I had

known. It was predominantly Muslim, and it had a lingua franca, Hausa, that like the Indian Urdu could be spoken fluently by Europeans. Finally, it was horse country and would be, I thought, a far freer and more unfettered place in which to live than the forest-clothed South.

On my arrival in Lagos, however, I had learned that I was posted to the Cameroons Province, that portion of the old German Kamerun that was administered as a part of the Southern Provinces of Nigeria. But there were compensations. The Cameroons could still prove a springboard to the North, for the Residents appointed to the province, at that period, all came from the Northern Provinces. It was the policy of the Nigerian government to substitute, in place of the quasi-military German system of administration, something as far as possible analogous to the indirect system so successfully introduced by Sir Frederick (later Lord) Lugard into the Northern Provinces. This system was preferred to the more direct system then in vogue over the greater part of the Southern Provinces.

Two days after my arrival I was summoned to the Secretariat to be informed that I was to serve on a board of survey on the Public Works Department stores. Apart from this acknowledgment of my existence, and one outstanding act of kindness, no one took the slightest notice of me during my three weeks' stay in the capital, a new experience for one fresh from Service life where the newcomer was invariably made welcome.

The act of kindness took me by surprise. One evening a large car drew up outside the rest house. From it purposefully emerged a blonde of striking and attractive appearance. Moments later she appeared at the open door of my room, having presumably learned where I was from the manager. With one all embracing glance she appraised me and the mad medley of my surroundings, gave me sixty seconds' worth of excellent advice, invited me to an informal party—an invitation subsequently to be repeated—at the Lieutenant Governor's house on the following evening, and swept out. This was the future Lady Gowers, wife of a Northern Provinces Resident, now acting as Lieutenant Governor, Southern Provinces.

A few days later I was on my way by tender toward Lagos har-

bor entrance, together with others, bound for Victoria, the Cameroons port, and for other ports nearer at hand. As we cleared the mole we could see our boat, the "Benue," rolling lazily at anchor a mile away. Lifting and falling in the deep Atlantic swell, we slowly drew alongside. At once a large boxlike contrivance, with seating for four, was neatly lowered onto our deck. This was the "Mammy Chair" by means of which passengers were customarily transferred to and from ocean-going ships at sea. Within the hour we and our baggage were on board, the ship had weighed anchor, and the casuarina trees at the harbor entrance were beginning to fade into the distance.

At noon on the fifth day the dim, distant outline of Mount Cameroon stood low on the horizon. By evening, we were slowly steaming into the lovely island-studded bay at whose heart lies the port of Victoria, watching the launches and the lighters casting off from the little jetty on their way out to meet us. Soon after sunset we were ashore being hospitably entertained, while others, in their kindness, looked after our mounds of baggage.

Next morning a diminutive steam engine, puffing stertorously as it drew its long train of trucks and trolleys up the steep gradients, carried us up the lower slopes of the mountain, through plantations of cocoa and rubber, to Soppo, the upper terminus of the Plantation Light Railway system. From Soppo we continued by mule carriage to Buea, the old German summer capital, now British provincial headquarters.

The town of Victoria had been founded by a British missionary in 1848. Indeed, British influence had already been paramount throughout the entire coastal area for some years, for a British naval squadron was based on the Spanish island of Fernando Po, which is clearly visible in fair weather from Victoria. In 1885, after years of hesitation, Great Britain had decided to accede to the request of local chiefs and to establish a British protectorate over the territory, but our envoys had been forestalled by a German mission by a mere matter of days.

During the 1914-1918 war the Cameroons had been invaded by Anglo-French forces. The chief port of Duala was captured in 1914, and by early 1916 the entire colony had been occupied. A narrow strip of territory running parallel to the Nigerian border

was assigned to the British, the bulk of the colony, about four-fifths in extent, remaining in the hands of the French. In 1922, the year after my arrival, both countries were given a mandate by the League of Nations covering the areas under their administration. The northern part of the strip allotted to Britain was incorporated into the neighboring Northern Provinces with which it had affinities. The southern half was made into a separate province. This province, under its British Resident, was organized into four divisions: Victoria, in which lay the thirteen-thousand-foot Cameroons Mountain, the two forest divisions of Kumba and Mamfe, and the high grassland division of Bamenda.

Buea, during the rains, was often blanketed in mist and cloud, but during the dry season, when I first arrived, the roads were lined with dense masses of roses in full bloom and the gardens were radiant with flowering trees and shrubs. The "Schloss," the country seat of the German Governor, now the British Residency, stood in a commanding position overlooking the station. With its twin turrets and its tiers of flower-decked terraces, it could well have been transported bodily from some Rhineland mountainside. The score or so of cream-tinted corrugated-iron bungalows grouped below looked prosaic by contrast.

My first few weeks were spent learning the everyday duties of an Assistant District Officer at headquarters, a task made more complicated by the fact that the Imperial German Code was still in operation in all matters where Nigerian law did not meet the case. The German silver mark, too, was still legal currency and much more popular than the unfamiliar Nigerian shilling. I worked in the Provincial Office, a massive two-storied stone and concrete building which, despite its solid construction, occasionally shivered ominously in response to the tremors of the still active volcano on whose slopes Buea was built. Mount Cameroon was not to erupt seriously until a year later, but the threat was always there.

My first Resident, "Tin Eye" Anderson, a dour and uncommunicative Scot with an eyeglass, was succeeded after a few months by Major U. F. H. Ruxton, a shy intellectual and one of Lugard's original band of soldier-administrators. Ruxton's quiet humor and sense of purpose soon made its mark on those who had

the wit to understand him and follow his lead. But with the idle and pretentious it was another matter. He possessed a devastating mastery of the written and spoken word, and no one who had ever exposed himself to the one or the other ever forgot the experience. Before he left us to become Lieutenant Governor, Southern Provinces, he had kindled in the hearts and minds of the young officers under his care a feeling of pride in their province and a devotion to their work which was never to leave them. His wife, a Frenchwoman of outstanding character and charm, was a personality in her own right. Her *West African Cookery Book* was a permanent contribution to the well-being of young bachelors new to the country, its greatest virtue being its emphasis on the value of local foods, normally scorned by Nigerian cooks who preferred using a tin-opener to marketing.

Some while before the Ruxtons had made their mark on the province, I was on my way to Mamfe, fourteen days' trek to the north. On the day of my departure my long train of Bakweri carriers had scarcely traveled a mile before they unslipped the cane containers to which their loads were strapped and deposited them by the wayside. Simultaneously there emerged from the undergrowth a score or more of their womenfolk, bent and haggard from hard labor on the farms. These at once began to shoulder the loads that their husbands had so unceremoniously shed. The Bakweri, it seemed, had definite views as to which sex was most suited for the carrying of uncomfortable burdens; I also had views and insisted that the women return home. I got no thanks from them and black looks from their husbands. It was a very sulky band that trudged up to the palm-thatched rest house where I was to spend the first night.

The next morning we left at first light to avoid the heat of the day, and from now onward the carriers became more cheerful. A routine had been established, each man knew his load, and my personal staff were finding their feet. Much of our road lay through high forest, dark, dank, and silent, though now and again a troop of monkeys swung, chattering indignantly, from branch to branch and an agitated hornbill noisily flapped its giant wings, kaw-kawing in protest, as it sought some more secluded treetop refuge. Every few miles we emerged, blinking in the un-

familiar sunlight, into cleared farmland where patches of broad-leaved cocoyams alternated with a dense array of tall, heavily laden plantains. In the center of each belt of farmland stood a village, the low palm-thatched houses stretching in long straight lines on each side of the street.

When the Germans had occupied this part of the Cameroons hinterland at the turn of the century they had uprooted the inhabitants from their scattered hamlets, buried deep in the heart of the forest, and had resettled them arbitrarily along cleared tracks connecting their military posts and administrative centers. In this manner they assured for themselves control and a ready supply of forced labor for public works and for their plantations on the coast. Every twelve to fifteen miles they built a rest camp at which traveling Europeans could find shelter and provisions for themselves and for their carriers.

Each individual village was allotted a chief and a headman. The so-called chief was usually an old man, put forward as their nominee and spokesman by the village elders, who quietly continued to control the internal affairs of the community behind the scenes. If German officialdom was aware of the existence of this body it certainly gave it no recognition. The village headman, on the other hand, though nominally subordinate to the chief, possessed real authority in day-to-day affairs insofar as they affected the administration. He was selected by the Germans for his force of character and for his knowledge of European ways and whims. In return for perquisites he was expected to produce food, labor, and materials, and anything else that the Germans might require. But if anything went wrong he took the blame. So long as he kept the German officials content and did not interfere with the inner mysteries of village life, the elders gave him their support.

All these matters were very new to me as I walked through village after village, but I could not fail to notice an absence of that cheerful good nature that I had been taught to expect, and later experienced, among African communities. From their narrow verandas the older men, in tattered vests and soiled loincloths, gazed at us with lackluster eyes, while the women, in dingy Mother Hubbards, paused momentarily and uninterestedly from

their household tasks. The children, like children everywhere, showed more curiosity. But even they, poor things, were often covered with the running ulcers that are typical of yaws, a disease very common in the forest.

Nearly every day we crossed broad streams and the occasional river by means of "hammock" bridges. These bridges consisted of a treadway and two supporting cables, contrived from thick strands of forest creeper knotted and lashed together. The ends were tethered, in the shape of a V, high above flood level, to growing timber on the opposing banks. They were then secured to each other by an interwoven network of thinner strands of creeper. The whole presented the appearance of an enormous elongated hammock. For anyone with a poor head for heights each one was a nightmare as, with every footfall, it swayed precariously above the crocodile-infested stream below.

On the ninth day we came to a village called Manyemen, the scene, I was to learn, of grim happenings two or three years earlier, before the British occupation had become effective. A leopard, one of the many in the forest, had turned man-eater. First a child had been taken near the village watering place, next a young woman disappeared on her way to the farms in the half-light of early morning. Other killings followed. But to the villagers this was no ordinary leopard. The whole countryside was steeped in the belief that demoniac possession could enable human beings to transform themselves, at will, into the form of the wild animal of their choice and to resume their human shape once their malign intentions had been fulfilled. If a community suspected that there was any such person in their midst the offender must at once be identified and exterminated.

The detection and punishment of witches was the responsibility of the local secret society whose archpriests, past masters in the art and practice of necromancy, would consult and interpret the signs and portents. Then, in a spirit of genuine belief or out of malice, they would name their chosen suspect. Once an accusation was lodged, the suspect was compelled to submit to trial by ordeal, a proceeding which was forbidden by law but which still persisted in dark and secret places. The forbidden ceremony took place deep in the forest. It involved the administration of a dead-

ly draught of poison, concocted from powdered sasswood or esere bean. He or she who vomited out the poison was adjudged innocent; failure to vomit spelled death and proof of guilt. The system provided scope for further abuse, for a victim's property became conveniently forfeit to the society, and no one dared question the integrity of judges who could kill at will and go on killing so long as their crimes did not come to the ears of government.

All who participated in a trial by ordeal, whether the outcome was fatal or not, were liable to prosecution. Evidence, however, was almost impossible to obtain. The terrified villagers would go to any length to rid themselves of the evil which they were convinced lay in their midst and not in the forest. At Manyemen, poison and the hangman's noose had claimed three victims for every one seized by the man-eater.

With this tale fresh in my memory I strode two days later into the village of Akak, two marches short of my destination. As the carriers stacked their loads in the rest house, two armed men in the blue shirts and shorts and pillbox hats of the Nigeria Police came up the path toward me. They reported that they had been sent by the District Officer at Mamfe to hunt a leopard which had already taken several people from the village. The D.O. was worried lest the villagers should suspect witchcraft.

This was disconcerting news to a newcomer. The rest house, like others of its kind, lay in a small clearing in the bush some little distance outside the village. It was of the usual mud and palm-thatched construction with open verandas. The doorways lacked doors, the windows had neither glass nor shutters. Any person or thing could come and go at will. The boys' quarters were at some distance, within call but no more. They at least could sleep behind barricades, and I knew that once dismissed for the night nothing would budge them. And who could blame them?

The evening followed the pattern of earlier evenings. The sun sank swiftly, the bats emerged from their hiding places in the trees, wheeling and sweeping overhead, and the dry chirrup of the crickets rose in volume until it became almost deafening. After a couple of whisky and sodas, I played to myself some of my more cheerful gramophone records, ate my evening meal, and

turned in. Should the man-eater pass my way the lighted hurricane lamp by my bedside would surely deter him, and comforted by this thought I fell asleep, my .45 revolver under my pillow.

Two hours later the rumble of an approaching tornado awakened me. Soon the thunder and the lightning became almost continuous, the wind rose, and with a roar the storm was upon us. Out went the lamp. Within half an hour it was all over. The wind dropped, the rain ceased, and except for the drip, drip of water from the eaves, all was silence. But not for long. Soon the frogs resumed their croaking, an owl hooted, a branch ripped from its parent tree by the storm fell to earth with a crash.

I had no torch and, in my improvidence, no matches with which to relight the lamp. Many hours remained before daylight. Time enough for my imagination to ascribe some sinister import to each variation in the customary night noises of the forest. The frogs fell suddenly silent—sure sign something was on the move. A frightened monkey chattered—monkeys always gave warning when their most feared and hated enemy, the leopard, was near at hand. Eventually I fell asleep, until a pot of tea by my bedside and the murmur of assembling carriers assured me that the long night was over.

Two days later I reached Mamfe. That same evening the Akak leopard struck again, but near enough to the village for the alarm to be raised. Surprised, the killer retreated, leaving the body of its victim half devoured. That same night the two police and a party of hunters armed with muzzle-loaders assembled, in a wide arc, on sloping ground overlooking the spot where the leopard had dragged its victim. Each one attached himself by a long strand of creeper to the remains. As soon as the leopard betrayed his presence by tugging at the bait, all were to open fire. The plan worked, and two days afterward the police returned triumphantly to Mamfe with an escort of drummers and dancers—behind them the dead leopard, slung on a bamboo pole, its body riddled with slugs.

In early 1921 there were three Europeans in Mamfe, the District Officer, the Medical Officer, and a young trading company assistant, who lived by the waterside a mile from the Government Station. I made a fourth, and one of my first tasks was to design,

lay out, and supervise the construction of a mud and palm-thatch house for myself. For the first weeks I lived in two rooms at the end of an old single-storied German office block, the greater part of which was occupied by the doctor, a cadaverous eccentric with an acid tongue but a kindly heart. His work apart, he was entirely wrapped up in a pair of putty-nosed monkeys who spent most of the day thunderously careering up and down the ceiling above our heads. My D.O. was equally cadaverous, for the climate and living conditions at Mamfe were not conducive to flesh-building, and I, too, before many months, was in little better state.

The Station was built on a bluff overlooking the Cross River. Most of the pernicious insects which had featured in our lectures on tropical medicine in London seemed to find the environment to their liking. Mosquitoes, of course, abounded, though it was not until later, when two of my successors died of yellow fever, that it was realized that the carrier of that disease, against which there was at that time no preventive inoculation, was among them. Tsetse were common, and a vicious stab in an unprotected ankle or in some other sensitive spot a frequent occurrence. The yellow chrysops, purveyors of the threadlike filarial worm that causes swellings at the joints and other embarrassments, were also plentiful. Snakes were at all times with us, and in one organized clearing of the Station we killed more than sixty. Two cobras took up their abode in the provision store of my new house within a few weeks of its first occupation. Poisonous centipedes were prone to fall wriggling from the roof, and Mamfe was the only place in Nigeria in which I ever saw the giant bird-eating spider. One evening, when I was reading by lamplight, I looked up to see it on the wall, a full six inches across and within two feet of my head. Mamfe was no place for anyone who lacked a sense of humor and an eye for the lighter side of disconcerting situations. But we took all these phenomena very much as a matter of course. We had read about them and heard about them, and here they were.

"In Mamfe they burn midnight oil," Ruxton was to record, for my D.O. thought of nothing but his work. Unhappily, he had an insatiable appetite for petty, self-defeating detail, and his "meticulous inaccuracy" (Ruxton again) was to cause him, and me, much unnecessary labor. As far as I was concerned, however, com-

pulsory attention to minutiae which I disliked did me no harm. It was the only way to learn thoroughly every aspect of divisional administration.

No time was wasted in introducing me to my duties. On the first morning, at six o'clock precisely, I was taken round the Station and shown the police lines, the prison, the warders' lines, and the prison farm, which lay on a little tongue of land at the confluence of the two waterways which together form the Cross River. After breakfast came office and court duties and the workings of the local treasury, which was to be my especial responsibility.

Caring little for the normal amenities of life, my D.O. lived at all times off enamelware, and I still recall with distaste those chipped plates and those stained cups and the harsh metallic flavor of everything that was served in them. In the Services we had learned to eschew avoidable discomfort, but in Mamfe in 1921 the use of china, particularly on tour, was, it seemed, a sign of decadence. And when I asked for timber for doors and shutters, glass being unobtainable, for my new house I was told that I was in a "bush house" and it was recognized that "bush houses" did not have such luxuries. However, I got my way.

Much of our time was spent on tour, the D.O. and A.D.O. alternating for a week or two at a time. We collected information, for as yet little was known of the province and its peoples, heard and settled complaints, tried a few cases, and in general did our best to help as many people in as many ways as we could.

On the northern and northeastern borders of the division, which at that time had, I suppose, a population of about eighty thousand, the forest gave way to a tangled eruption of precipitous hills separated one from the other by deep, densely wooded valleys. Beyond the hills rose the four-thousand-foot escarpment of the Bamenda Plateau. Perched on a series of terraces on the higher ridges of the foothills lived the survivors of an earlier era. These scattered communities spoke a variety of dialects and were either suspicious of or actively hostile toward their neighbors. Driven out of the forest or down the escarpment by more numerous or more warlike enemies, they had taken refuge in these barren and all but impenetrable hills. Here, with a savage tenacity, they had

contrived to survive, preying on each other and on any stranger unwise enough to venture in their direction.

Whenever I could, I toured these hills, only too happy to emerge into open country and breathe clean air, poised a thousand feet and more above the forest which stretched unbroken to the westward as far as the eye could see. My instructions were to persuade the more amenable of these primitive communities to descend from their hilltop eyries and settle along the cleared track which ran from north to south along the valleys. We planned to establish little markets along this track where the hill folk could sell their palm oil and palm kernels and acquire a taste for the products of civilization. But, as so often occurs, Africa knew best. The hill people knew nothing of the anopheles mosquito, but they did know that sickness lay in the valleys, and the following year I found myself moving the road to the people, not the people to the road, and laying out a new series of settlements above the belt of woodland and along a line free from danger of malaria.

I gradually grew to like these hill people. They were merry, if mischievous, and when the farming season was over and the harvest gathered in, their days and nights were largely spent absorbing corn beer and palm wine and in the brawls that such overindulgence provoked. We did our best to wean them from their lawless, carefree ways. Markets, missions, and schools, we said, pointed the way to a better life. Markets, in principle, they accepted, but they feared the advent of the missions. They claimed that the new learning would make the younger generation resentful of their elders' authority and that this indiscipline would disrupt the life of the community, though they did not put it so politely. In this we had some sympathy for them, for we did not wish to provoke the anarchy that follows when the old ways are abandoned before the new ways have properly taken root. The few missionaries working in the area were, we found, rigid in their outlook. They were slow to concede that it was as much environment as original sin that was at the root of the cruel and revolting customs that we deplored as much as they did.

Personally, I found the gnarled and wizened elders of the hill clans well disposed, once their confidence had been gained. More so than the forest people they were ready to welcome a friendly

and familiar visitor who came prepared to listen and learn. Little by little I began to understand the privations and anxieties that dominated their lives. The climax came one morning when I was sitting with a group of them around me, perched on a fallen pillar of stone, one of several which encircled a narrow, tree-bordered hillside terrace.

We were talking about the days when the ritual consumption of human flesh was a part of their daily life. Food was then desperately scarce and the maintenance of the aged and infirm who could no longer hunt or farm was more than the community could contrive, except for the few whose acquaintance with the supernatural made them valuable. The aged, it was conveniently believed, were prone to possession by evil spirits which would prey upon their fellows. Such as these, once identified, were put to the sacrifice and consumed. Overventuresome travelers from other parts and the victims of intertribal warfare met a like fate. In fact, here where we were sitting, they told me, was the site of the sacrificial altar.

As I displayed interest, the old men, their tongues loosened by palm wine, began to describe in grisly detail, exactly how these things had been arranged. The persons of the condemned were secured, head downward, between two upright stakes, their limbs spreadeagled. Beneath them burnt a slow, smoky fire. Around in anticipation, squatted the elders, each with his back against an upright slab of rock in the position to which his status entitled him. As life passed, boiling palm oil was introduced into the body, from above—I had heard enough.

II

By the summer of 1923 I was home on leave. On my return, I was posted for six months to the provincial office at Buea. After the freedom of the bush I found the more formal life of provincial headquarters and constant preoccupation with government forms and returns and routine correspondence very irksome. But the experience was necessary, and Hunt, the Acting Resident, allowed me to spend at least two weekends a month indulging a newly acquired interest in elephant and their ways.

After six months at Buea I was again posted to Mamfe, this time to act as District Officer, and once more I set out on the long trudge northward. Now, being a little more experienced, I decided that on this occasion, unless my health was to suffer permanent harm, I must learn something about cooking and impart that knowledge to my cook. When I was last at Mamfe I had seemed to live on a diet based almost exclusively on emaciated chicken, puny, pallid eggs, and banana fritters. Butcher's meat and fresh fish could only be secured, and then only on rare occasions, by an enterprising and persistent cook, and mine was neither of these things. English vegetables were locally unknown and fresh fruit, apart from limes and undersized oranges, a rarity.

The average cook of those times was indifferently trained and unimaginative, and anything in the nature of entertainment involved a holocaust of tins. Betweentimes, only a liberal drenching of Worcester sauce could make the majority of meals palatable. Food never remained wholesome for long. Twelve years were yet to pass before the first oil-operated refrigerators arrived, and what could not be consumed within twenty-four hours went to waste in that hot and humid climate.

It was now that Mrs. Ruxton's cookbook proved its value. Highly palatable local foods whose existence had been either unsuspected or dismissed contemptuously by my cook as "black man chop" began to appear on the menu. Vegetables could, though with difficulty, be grown. And finally, when Mrs. Ruxton sent me up her number one cook's mate, now anxious for an independent job, the battle was won.

The D.O.'s house, which was surrounded by a narrow moat and a wall with a castellated watchtower in one corner, stood on a high bluff. Directly underneath lay a broad expanse of water where two rivers joined. On the evening of my arrival and while it was still light, a herd of hippopotamus, for the first time for many years, amused themselves by splashing and tumbling in the shallows below. "Look," I was told, "our hippopotamus have come to welcome the new D.O." A few days later, while traveling downstream by canoe, a number of these creatures, more than ever formidable when viewed at such close range, began to surface around us. The head canoeman seemed quite undisturbed, but

when he observed, reflectively, that were it not that the D.O. was with them, the canoe would by now be overturned, the nearest sandbank seemed to me a far, far better place for us than mid-stream until the herd had betaken itself elsewhere.

In ways such as this the deeply rooted belief of the forest people in a mystical union between the human and the animal world impinged upon my daily life and work. Even educated people shared in these beliefs. Thirty miles from Mamfe the east-west telegraph line connected with a line running from Buea up to Bamenda. The little telegraph office, which had been sited by the Germans on the edge of the village, had collapsed. The Nigerian Department of Posts and Telegraphs decided, with the best intentions, that the subpostmaster and his linemen would be happier in cooler, healthier surroundings on a little open plateau a mile out on the Bamenda road. It fell to me, as D.O., to lay out the new office and the living quarters for the staff. From the moment of occupation, however, the postmaster bombarded me with telegrams and letters demanding, in almost hysterical terms, protection against the malignancy of the local villagers. Nightly they threatened his person and his property. In the guise of leopards they ravaged his hen houses. In the shape of elephants they uprooted his plantains. The realities of his predicament were bad enough and I had every sympathy. I had myself seen steaming elephant droppings within a quarter of a mile of the Post Office, and leopards were notoriously common in the surrounding hills. Before long the site was abandoned in favor of one less remote from human habitation.

About this time, too, a complaint was laid to me by the assembled elders of a large village that they were being raided nightly by a herd of elephant supernaturally possessed by members of a neighboring community. There was little that I could do to help. Later, a specific claim for damages to crops was made against a farmer from the village alleged to be responsible for the trouble. A summons was granted. But when the case came up for hearing, the plaintiff maintained that the defendant had committed the offense in the guise of an elephant. This was serious, for as I have explained earlier, accusations of this nature could easily result in a resort to trial by ordeal and the death of one or

more of the participants. But the defendant, so far from denying the allegations, said indignantly, "Of course I can assume the form of an elephant, but so too can the plaintiff. We have for long ranged the forest together in a perfectly friendly manner. But recently a woman has come between us and this claim for damages is brought out of malice."

Although reminded that claims and accusations of this nature were an offense against the Criminal Code, and that those making them were liable to imprisonment, both parties insisted that they were telling the truth and refused to withdraw. This left me with no alternative, and both men had to serve a small sentence. Had no such action been taken the trouble would have spread and we could soon have had a murder trial on our hands.

In those days, District Officers in charge of divisions had powers of imprisonment up to one year. Their juniors were restricted to three months. Jurisdiction in civil cases and the power to inflict fines were similarly defined. Special powers were granted, at need, to deal with specific offenses, homicide included, for which more drastic penalties were applicable. At the end of every month a *précis* of petty cases was forwarded to distant Lagos to the Supreme Court. In serious cases the proceedings were forwarded in full. The judge of the Supreme Court would then confirm, amend, or quash sentences, or order a retrial, as he thought fit.

In practice the great majority of judgments were upheld. District Officers made up for their limited legal training by their knowledge of custom and language and by their ability, acquired as the result of many years' experience, to determine with considerable accuracy whether or not a witness was telling the truth. These factors apart, problems of distance alone prevented the Supreme Court from operating in the more remote divisions of the Cameroons and elsewhere. Even the Resident himself could only pay us one visit of inspection a year, spending a few days, in the short dry season, in each divisional headquarters in turn. We were left very much to ourselves to carry on as best we could. The various departmental officers, too, toured once a year only. It was the D.O.'s job to run the police detachment, to maintain the roads and government buildings, and to control such departmental staff as happened to be stationed in his division.

There was little that did not fall to a D.O.'s lot in one of his many capacities. In the course of my first three years, I was personally called upon to supervise two hangings and two exhumations. The second exhumation was a particularly gruesome undertaking. The dead man was believed to have been murdered and I had no alternative but to examine the remains closely and to take measurements to prove identity. The body had been underground for nearly a year. The experience proved too much even for my hard-bitten police escort, and, despite the use of a scarf drenched in cologne, I had to make three attempts before completing the task.

An added interest to our life came from the fact that, politically and administratively, we were on almost virgin ground. British occupation had been so recent that there had been neither the time nor the staff to accumulate information. The Germans had left no records and we had few precedents to guide us or to warn us what to avoid. Doctor Mansfeld, for many years German Commandant at Mamfe, had been, by reputation, a sympathetic and a liberal-minded man. But he was an exception. In general our methods and our objectives bore little resemblance to those of our German predecessors who, preoccupied with pioneering problems, had little time to study the social structure of the Cameroons peoples, still less adapt what was most meritorious in their way of life to modern circumstances.

Quite recently, a specially selected District Officer named Cadman, later to die in Bamenda, had been posted to the Cameroons from the Northern Provinces to instruct us in the Northern system of administration. Guided by him, we began to inquire into the history, customs, and beliefs of the local people. We hoped that by winning their confidence we could persuade the traditional leaders of the various communities to emerge from the obscurity into which the Germans had driven them and help us to revive the old village councils and to establish clan councils. From these beginnings we hoped to evolve, eventually, larger units which could be given control over their own markets, roads, schools, and internal affairs generally and the money with which to administer them.

But all this lay in the future and none of it would be possible

without a substantial increase in our meager revenues. Neither were there any signs of such an increase in the foreseeable future, for in those distant days there was no United Kingdom Colonial Development Act. Our immediate problem, therefore, was to establish confidence and to amass the information which would help us to lay the foundations of the sort of structure that we had in mind. At least, we felt, we knew where we wanted to go.

Chapter 2

TALKING DRUMS

1924-1927

When in October, 1924, I returned to Nigeria from my second leave, there lay before me the pleasant prospect of four months' "study leave" in the Northern Provinces in order to learn Hausa, after which I would be posted to Bamenda. Government regulations then decreed that officers in the Administrative Service would not be confirmed in their appointments at the end of their three years' period of probation unless they had passed a written and an oral examination in one of the principal languages of the country. As far as the Cameroons Province was concerned, each one of the four divisions had a local language, no one of which was of any real value outside that division.

The lingua franca of the southern Cameroons was pidgin English. Contrary to popular belief true pidgin is not merely a debased and distorted form of English. In its "purest" form, as Krio, it is almost a language in its own right. Built over a century or more round a hard core of English, it conforms to a definite pattern of grammar and syntax. It is, furthermore, highly tonal and extremely expressive. The Germans, who disliked too wide a use of their own language, even issued a printed pidgin phrase book for their military forces. A number of my brother officers considered the use of pidgin demeaning and retrograde. Others were frankly baffled by it in its crudest form. Personally, I tried to speak it accurately and with the correct intonation, for it was often the only means of communication short of using an interpreter.

Plainly pidgin could scarcely be a subject for public examinations, and the final decision was that Cameroons A.D.O.'s should learn Hausa, the principal language of the Northern Provinces. Hausa was, in fact, only spoken in the Southern Cameroons in

the little trading settlements which the ubiquitous Northern traders had established on the outskirts of every town of importance. The decision, therefore, seemed to us to be strange, though to me, personally, it was highly acceptable, for it had always been toward the northern horizon that my eyes had been turned from the day that I landed in Nigeria.

For me, therefore, as I set out on my long train journey north-eastward from Lagos, this was to be a voyage on which I set high hopes. Neither was I to be disappointed. Early on the morning of the third day, we steamed slowly past the tall earthen walls of Kano, principal city of the North, the battlemented gateways already thronged with busy people. Later I rode into the city. Here was another Nigeria. The faces were the faces of Africa, but in all else I seemed to be back in one of the great towns of northern India. The humped cattle, the camel trains, the laden donkeys, the white-robed crowds, the dust, the smells, all reminded me of the country to which I had once been so greatly attracted.

Rather more than three months later, having passed my examinations, I set out on my return journey to the Cameroons, determined to come back to the North as soon as ingenuity and argument could pave the way. To further my design, I engaged a Northern head servant, half Hausa, half Fulani. With his help I was to improve my knowledge of Hausa and to learn Fulani as well. There were a considerable number of these Northern nomads on the Bamenda Plateau, for which I was now bound. They had been tempted there by the rich grazing and by the absence of the tsetse fly that had decimated their flocks and herds in the heavily wooded river valleys further north.

Bamenda was sixteen days' trek from the coast, and on the fourteenth day, as I breasted the escarpment, a little breathless from the three-thousand-foot climb, I sniffed the cool hill air with appreciation. No more fetid forests, no more sullen forest dwellers, ridden with superstition. In their place, a cooler, fresher world. Here were rolling grasslands amid which, in tall grass-thatched huts, lived a more virile and a more friendly people, ready with their laughter and ready with a greeting to the passing stranger.

The last rest camp before Bamenda was at Bali, a large town,

the largest that I had yet seen in the Cameroons, and the home of one of the four principal fongs, or chiefs, of the division. The rest camp, originally a German Protestant mission station, had been temporarily taken over by government, and as I sat at my ease that afternoon, glad to relax after the long morning's march over a seemingly unending series of ridges, I heard that the Fong himself proposed paying me a visit.

The Fong of Bali of those days was a very old man, so old that he was unable to walk unassisted, but when he emerged from his wheeled conveyance, huge, swart, grizzled, he was still the embodiment of authority. For many years he had firmly controlled the present-day descendants of the warrior tribe that two generations earlier had carved out for itself a tiny kingdom in the fertile hills and valleys where they now lived. The Bali and other invaders from the north were closely organized in tribal groups, each under its own chief. Their traditional attire, a knee-length embroidered gown of homespun and a woven "pincushion" cap, was striking and colorful in comparison with the shirt or vest and loincloth of imported cotton in common use in the forest areas further south. The Bali and other invader tribes invariably treated their chiefs with deep respect. While in their presence, their *chindas* or personal retainers clapped softly at appropriate moments in token of respect and invariably addressed them with their hands cupped before their mouths.

It was through one of these *chindas* that the old Fong spoke to me that day. He held strong views and saw no need for restraint in imparting them. "When the Germans were here," he observed, "there was far more trade, and goods were much cheaper," and asked, "Why do you British not build more roads like the Germans and why do you allow these strange missionaries, so unlike the old ones, to come amongst us and disturb our young men and women?" But he did at least concede that he was glad that the old days of forced labor on the German plantations were a thing of the past.

Very early on the following morning, with the francolin calling in the maize fields and the night mists still shrouding the valleys, we again set out and two hours later came within sight of our still distant destination. There, far away, perched at the sum-

mit of a precipitous cliff face, stood Bamenda. Several hundred feet below, though as yet not visible, sprawled the Hausa town where traders and craftsmen of many races, mostly from Northern Nigeria, supplied the daily needs of the inhabitants of the Government Station and the towns and villages of the neighborhood.¹

The central feature of the Station was the fort, a square red brick building surrounded by a now shallow moat. Nearby, the District Officer's house overlooked the valley, while along the cliff top stood a line of thatched houses, several of them vacant since the departure, a few months before my arrival, of a company of the Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force which had been here since the war. Besides the D.O. there was a doctor and three A.D.O's, two of whom, E. G. Hawkesworth and myself, were to be constantly on tour. The climate was so cool and fresh, we were almost five thousand feet above sea level, that European vegetables flourished and we all grew strawberries in our gardens. Most of us kept two ponies—they cost less than fifteen pounds apiece—and, there being no tsetse in the higher parts of the division, touring on horseback was the usual thing.

Our African office staff at Bamenda consisted of three clerks, an interpreter, and a number of Government Messengers. These messengers were especially selected for their good character and for their knowledge of local languages, customs, and history. The majority were honest, faithful men of long experience, full of wisdom and invaluable advisers and companions to young and raw Administrative Officers. While in the Station they carried messages and kept the office tidy and brought us up to date with day-to-day events which might otherwise have been kept from our notice.

It was on tour, however, that they really came into their own. They kept the carriers up to the mark and made certain that they were properly fed and housed. If the roof of the rest house leaked

1. These little Hausa towns were to be found at even the smallest administrative and trading centers. They were known in Mamfe and in the forest country in general, as well as in the neighboring provinces of Southern Nigeria, as *abakpas*. It is also noteworthy that hidden away in the bush adjoining certain older settlements in forest country there were the remains of what were termed *ningah* towns (i.e., "nigger towns," "nigger" being Cameroon pidgin for slave). Here small slave communities and parties of slaves in transit to the coast in response to local demand (not for transportation abroad) had been maintained.

or the firewood was damp or the water dirty, it was the messenger who insured that matters were put right. But these were merely their routine tasks. Their great value lay in their encyclopedic knowledge of everything that had occurred, or was likely to occur, in the touring area. The young Administrative Officers of those days, and their successors, owed much to their messengers; they taught them wisdom and they kept them out of trouble. Though humble in origin and frequently illiterate, as public servants they had few equals. Opportunities for corruption were infinite, but only a handful betrayed their trust. It was the Administrative Officer's duty to protect the poor and succor the oppressed, but it was often the Government Messenger who insured that they got a hearing. They were the eyes and ears of the administration, and without them many a wrong would never have been righted and many an act of oppression would have gone unpunished.²

The peoples in the central parts of the division had come down, during previous centuries, from below Lake Chad, absorbing, exterminating, or driving before them the less warlike tribes that they encountered in their path. The survivors in their turn thrust their weaker neighbors to the south and west into the foothills or over the escarpment.

The communities these newcomers had dispossessed were socially more loosely knit and less disposed to accept without question either the authority of their own chiefs and elders or that of the administration. In fact, the further away from Bamenda they lived the more lawless and violent their behavior. The Germans seem to have considered them to be incurable and to have contented themselves with occasional domiciliary visits only. Whenever a patrol under a European N.C.O. marched in, the hill folk would move out to coigns of vantage among the boulder-strewn hilltops. Anyone unwise enough to show himself on the skyline would risk a bullet, anyone who stayed behind would risk a beating. After a day or so of vain attempts to parley, the patrol would

2. The point should be made, however, that the quality of these Government Messengers in their role as interpreters could vary in accordance with the characteristics of the tribe from which it was necessary to recruit them. The administrative staffs of some areas were, in consequence, not so fortunate as others. Indeed, in such cases, some recruiting had to be done outside the area.

withdraw with such livestock as it could lay its hands on, leaving a score or more smoldering huts and felled plantain patches behind it.

Utterly primitive and thoroughly intransigent, as we ourselves were to find, they seemed to respond to nothing short of force, though the true answer, given the time and the staff, was some form of permanent occupation. The only positive good that had emerged from the patrol system was to persuade the victims that a superior authority did, in fact, exist and they would be wise at least to confine their malpractices to their own hills and valleys and refrain from raiding their neighbors.

The departure of the troops from Bamenda was, before long, to cause trouble. They had been withdrawn, not because the British administration thought that it could do without them, but because "wise men" at League of Nations headquarters at Geneva felt that a military garrison in mandated territory was inappropriate, especially as the Bamenda people, who made very good soldiers, were enlisting in the Nigeria Regiment in considerable numbers. We who had the task of bringing under control the turbulent foothill people, whom even the Germans had never succeeded in weaning from their lawless ways, found it difficult to appreciate the force of these arguments.

Before the restlessness induced by the departure of the troops had begun to spread, I was sent with a small armed escort to reconnoiter the Agè area which lay in a jumble of rocky, wooded hills near our border with the Northern Provinces. Agè had never before been visited by a British officer and only on two or three occasions by German military patrols. Its inhabitants had an evil reputation even among the primitive, untamed hill folk, their nearest neighbors, who, as we well know, were far from being squeamish. The last European who had passed their way, a German N.C.O. with a small escort, had been ambushed and murdered with all his companions. His skin and theirs, trophies of war, had been subsequently used to cover the machete handles and scabbards of his murderers. This incident had taken place during the war and had, in consequence, gone unpunished. These German N.C.O.-led military patrols had a reputation for conducting themselves bru-

tally, and there seemed reason to suppose that a more friendly approach might be successful.

It took me a week to reach the principal Agè village. It lay a long day's march from a group of hills whose inhabitants, though wild, were not unfriendly. I traveled with twenty carriers and a police escort of an N.C.O. and four men, for a larger force would have provoked suspicion. Our reception, though guarded, was better than we had expected. I was shown a hut large enough to contain my bed and belongings, and food, water, and firewood were provided without argument. We paid at once, and generously. Payment for supplies, we noticed, was obviously a new experience.

That evening, by a log fire, the old men of the village showed themselves willing to talk about their past history, their customs, and their crops and even to refer, though obliquely, to the fate of their last European visitor. After all, the Germans were our enemies and theirs, and we had defeated them. Why, I suppose they thought, should I feel any distaste for their macabre contribution to a common victory?

Things were going far better than I had hoped. But the next day I succumbed to a severe attack of malaria, and for the following forty-eight hours I was very ill indeed, being quite unable to keep down either food or drink or even move from my bed. This mishap was ascribed by many of those with me to the spells and incantations of the local witch doctors.

My morale was not to be improved by the news, brought to me by my police corporal, that two of his men who had visited a nearby market had seen human flesh exposed for sale. They could have been mistaken, but they, and my carriers, believed the story to be true. As a result both the carriers and my personal staff began to show signs of panic. On the following morning the corporal and Joseph, my Government Messenger, both warned me that unless I showed myself and gave signs of being able very shortly to set out on the return journey, my carriers would bolt. They were sure that the village was under the control of evil spirits, and the recollection of the earlier massacre had begun to get on their nerves.

By now, thanks to quinine, my fever had almost subsided,

and though I was still very weak I decided that I must move out next day. My police contrived a hammock out of game nets which they slung on to a stout raffia palm rib. They even persuaded a batch of Agè men to carry me as far as the next village, where they would be relieved. Their strength and sureness of foot were a godsend, for the track was narrow, winding, and precipitous. The stream crossings gave most trouble. The path on either side dipped and rose steeply, while the bridges themselves consisted of a four-foot-wide structure of branches lashed together with creeper, the whole being slung from two tree trunks on the opposing banks. I crossed by dragging myself along on hands and knees, humiliated by my weakness and almost overcome by nausea as I swayed dizzily above the foaming current that tumbled over the rocks fifteen feet below.

From the first night's halting place the track began to improve and my strength to return. On the fourth day we reached the village where I had left my pony, on whose back I was by now able to sit without falling. By the time we got back to Bamenda I had recovered.

Later on in the year, when the news of the troops' departure had penetrated to the border, it set in motion a train of rumors: "Government had departed," "Missionaries alone remain." "There are some police," but "everyone knows that the police rifles do not fire live ammunition." And not many months passed before a number of foothill villages, stimulated by the news, began to raid their neighbors. Two killings were reported and others were rumored. For some time these particular villages had refused to produce their token tax of one shilling a head. There were also stories that traffic in slaves, suppressed by the Germans, had been resumed between the hill country and the coast towns far to the south, using deserted trails through almost uninhabited forest.

So off I went, this time with Messenger Tum, a cheerful soul with an enormous nose and a permanent grin whom no situation could abash, and a police escort of one N.C.O. and three constables. The intention was that I should spend two to three weeks among the rebels in the hope that they might be persuaded to pay more attention to the orders of government and less to the dictates of their lawless natures.

Communication between hamlet and hamlet in the foothill country was by drum language or by a "yodeled" variant of the same language. The drums were hollowed-out logs of wood, solid at both ends and with a central slit. They varied in size. Some were easily portable, others were massive and deeper toned. So broken was the terrain and so deep and precipitous the valleys that a journey between two hamlets whose inhabitants could clearly recognize each other with the naked eye might well take three to four hours. Conversation by drum or by voice across the intervening space was, on the other hand, relatively simple, except in a high wind.

I had chosen a village of reasonable reputation as my base. Across the valley lay a cluster of little hamlets which sheltered a number of the more truculent characters of the area. Some of these, two murderers among them, I hoped to arrest, and as the last of my weary carriers deposited his load with a grunt of relief I summoned our two drummer-interpreters. It was the custom to enlist such men as these from the nearest friendly community. They came willingly, both for the pay and because, in all probability, they had themselves suffered from the very people whom we were here to chasten.

I asked them to drum out a message to the elders of the villages around us to assemble for a friendly talk. Soon a drummer was busy belaboring his instrument, his polished drumsticks flashing in the sunlight as they descended beyond, below, or athwart the central slit. "Bunka bonka bonk bonk bunka bonka . . ." called the drum, pitch and tone changing with each stroke. Then, after a short interval, from across the valley, thinly but clearly came the reply "Binka binka bink bink binka bonk . . ." Soon from more distant points on the hilltop and deep in the valley other drums followed suit. The replies were evasive, but so far not unfriendly. A further message asked for foodstuffs for the carriers, for which payment would be made. We could see quite clearly the little clumps of grass-roofed huts, some tucked away in a fold in the ground, others perched on some boulder-strewn eminence. Tiny figures moved about between the huts, and now and again there was a burst of "yodeling" as individual hillmen commented from some remote farm or wine palm copse.

Late in the afternoon a group of elderly men approached our campsite followed by three youths bearing a token contribution of plantains for the carriers and a token offering of tax in coin and "brass rods." These so-called rods were still a common form of currency in the border villages. They took the form of bracelets of coiled wire one eighth of an inch in diameter. Each was valued at threepence, and twenty-five shillings' worth was as much as a man could comfortably carry.

A discussion then followed, lengthy but inconclusive. The elders were told that "government" desired that they and their people should live their lives as they wished, but they must persuade their young men to cease raiding their neighbors and they must clear and widen the overgrown paths between the villages. In this way markets could be established to which traders could come from Bamenda to buy their palm oil and kernels and sell them in return the goods they themselves needed. At present no one would come among them for fear of robbery and violence. They must also acknowledge the authority of government by paying in full the tribute now overdue. It was little enough, but if coin was the problem they had plenty of pigs and goats and sheep for which a good price would be given. Finally, they were sheltering a number of men who had committed serious crimes, including two murderers. These men must be produced to stand their trial.

To this the elders gave the classic, and all too familiar, reply that they themselves had no wish to oppose government, but these days the young men would not listen to them. There was little truth in these protestations. They were well able to bring their young men to heel if they so wished, and they were warned that, if they did not comply, compulsion would follow. They then withdrew saying that they would talk matters over and bring me an answer in the morning.

As night fell and as I sipped my drink outside the little hut in which my bed had with difficulty been erected, drumming began at various points along the hillside and in the valley below. Shortly afterward Tum, my messenger, and the police corporal came with worried expressions on their faces to say that the messages had taken on a truculent tone. They reminded me that the

escort had only five rounds of ammunition each. My D.O. had assured me that this would be ample, for he had visited the area some months back and had found the people quite peaceable. This, I was to think later, was not surprising. All that he had asked of them was information about their customs. My requests were of quite a different order. Never again, in view of what was to follow, did I move into troubled country without an ample supply of ammunition.

But that evening I told myself that my informants were exaggerating and that the hillmen were bluffing. However, as the night wore on, the tone and context of the messages grew more and more menacing. "Our custom is that money is only exchanged for women. Where then is the white woman that has been promised to us?" and "The police guns do not fire bullets like the soldiers' guns. They are only pieces of wood." And "In the morning we will see what this white man is made of. Let us hide with our guns in the bush by the track that he must follow, and fire when he passes." But I still believed what I had been told in Bamenda. I still thought that the interpreters were exaggerating because they wanted me to make trouble for these villagers who had, for so long, pestered them with impunity.

Next morning, leaving one policeman to supervise the packing of the loads preparatory to moving across the valley, I set off along the hillside, accompanied by the remainder of the escort with the two drummer-interpreters in the lead. We moved in single file along a narrow path which wound through alternating patches of woodland and grassland. As we were passing through a little copse I heard a dry click and almost simultaneously saw the two guides throw themselves flat on the ground followed a second later by the police corporal who was in front of me. As he was on the way down I heard a second click, and before the third time that hammer snapped home against flint—for now I knew what had alarmed them—I was myself prostrate.

For a few moments we lay in silence waiting for the next move; then, as nothing happened, I told the police corporal to fire one round into the undergrowth. The effect was instantaneous, and as the echoes of his shot rolled down the valley the sound of breaking branches and a glimpse of a bounding, all but naked figure, a

flintlock held above his head, showed plainly that the threats of overnight had not been idle bluff. Had it not been for a faulty flint, or damp gunpowder, my earlier unbelief would have been my undoing. At point-blank range the flying fragments of miscellaneous metal with which the muzzle-loader would have been crammed could not have missed. We returned to camp with rifles loaded, alert for further mischief, but all was quiet save for the drums which busily tapped out the news.

Before we dropped down into the valley on our way to our night's destination, I called our drummers to beat out a message that if there were any more attempts at interference fire would be opened at once and the whole village would be punished. We would spend the night across the valley as arranged. Now was no time to change our plans. Any signs of a retreat would provoke further trouble, and we had not enough ammunition to withstand a concerted attack. So, slithering and stumbling, we made our way down the hillside and then slowly clambered upward to emerge on the ridge which we had examined with so much curiosity the day before. The entire population, men, women, and children, had vanished from the scene, in itself a bad sign. Late in the evening, however, token provisions were brought by a pair of sullen old gentlemen and a handful of youths who were openly insolent in their demeanor.

As darkness fell the thump and rattle of the drums grew louder and catcalls and insults were screamed and shouted at us from the shadows. Mad, senseless laughter echoed through the night. The beer pots and the palm wine gourds were obviously being emptied fast. It was quite clear that no one must stray beyond our ring of fires whose bright flames would give warning to the police sentries of any attempt to creep too close.

On the following day we moved into more friendly country and onward toward Bamenda. On my return I asked for permission for Hawkesworth and myself to return at once with a dozen police and, this time, ample ammunition. We were sure that together we could straighten matters out without bloodshed. But if we delayed, the rains would set in, the grass would rapidly grow to its full height, and we should be unable to see, much less come to terms with our adversaries. A further nine months would then

pass before we could return with any hope of success, and by then the hillmen would have become even more truculent, convinced that we were afraid of them.

But in faraway Lagos, indecision cost us the weeks we needed, and when permission arrived the rains had started and it was too late. In the following dry season I returned, accompanied, not by Hawkesworth as he and I had hoped, but by a police officer and two dozen police.

In addition to arresting the man who had attacked us, I had been instructed to stay long enough to bring the countryside in general to its senses. To this end I had been given special magisterial powers to try as many persons as the police could lay their hands upon from the long list of those wanted for homicide, arson, wounding, robbery with violence, slave-dealing, and other serious crimes.

As we had expected, on the very first day that we moved into the disturbed area we were met with every sign of hostility. Each village and hamlet we approached was deserted, while on the skyline scattered groups of wooden-helmeted warriors shouted and jeered as they waved their spears and flintlocks at us.

On the second day trouble came. We were halted halfway up the side of a valley, the police strung out covering a group of our carriers who were collecting firewood and camp-building material in a hollow below us. Suddenly, there was movement in the tall grass on the opposite ridge. Then, bounding down the slope, came a long line of yelling hillmen, bent on cutting off the carriers. The nearest section of the escort was ordered to fire two rounds. As the shots rang out and two men fell, the oncoming wave checked momentarily, then came on again. A further volley and two more men fell. This time, discomfited, they broke and cascaded obliquely away from their intended victims to disappear in the undergrowth lower down the valley. Apparently the police rifles did shoot to kill after all.

Further skirmishes were to follow, but none so serious as the first. Soon the elders realized that this was no fleeting visit. We intended to stay until they had done what was required of them. Reluctantly they decided to parley, and within the next three weeks I was to hear between twenty-five and thirty criminal cases,

the majority relating to slave-dealing, armed robbery, and wounding. The paths between the principal villages were soon cleared and widened, and the women began a novel and highly profitable trade in foodstuffs and livestock with our carriers and the members of our escort, which continued until, our task completed, we returned home with our prisoners. My own assailant was later convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment.

During the months that had intervened between this expedition and the incidents that had made it necessary, we had been occupied in other directions, one of which was road-making. The Germans had constructed a few graded carriage roads in the division which, once metalled and bridged, would be suitable for motorcars except during mid-rains. Hawkesworth and I both hoped to bring cars back with us after our next leave. But first we had to realign the road down the cliff face and extend it toward the south, for until this was done we were isolated. Having no instruments, we worked by eye, but it was a beginning and our amateur roads did, before long, take light motor traffic.

But our most important task lay, as in Mamfe, in our inquiries into every facet of the daily lives of the tribal communities of the division. By delving deeply into the remembered past, we strove to uncover and resuscitate the long-suppressed fountains of authority which had once given life to family, village, clan, and tribe. In this way we should be able to substitute a modified and modernized version of the earlier structure of tribal society for the arbitrary and unsanctified system of administration imposed by the Germans.

In the chiefdoms our task was relatively simple. Here were men already invested with authority by custom and by birth, men with the will and the personality to use that authority. With communities such as these the problem was to gain acceptance of the idea that an authority that was predominantly autocratic must soon become more broadly based.

It was among the more loosely knit communities that we ran into trouble. Each little village was fiercely jealous of its independence and ill-disposed to share that independence with others, a common origin and common interest notwithstanding. Still less

were such communities agreeable to subordinate themselves to the authority of others, whatever the historic justification. But, unless we could persuade villages to combine, we would never be able to instil a sense of common purpose, still less devise clan groups wealthy enough, at least in prospect, to finance and control their own schools, roads, and markets. But we made some progress, we amassed a vast deal of information, and presumably we reaped some credit for our good intentions. Until revenues improved we could do little more than this.

In the late spring of 1926 I was home on leave again, and that summer I was married. In the autumn I sailed with my wife from Liverpool, bound again for the Cameroons. The tour began auspiciously enough, for we managed to drive our car, a solid twelve-horsepower Rover coupe, through French territory to Bamenda, constructing or repairing bridges and culverts as we went with the aid of our carriers. This Rover was the first car to be stationed in Bamenda and the first ever to descend and climb the cliff road below the Station and venture into the countryside beyond.

But misfortune followed. All three European wives in Bamenda fell dangerously ill from some infection, never convincingly diagnosed. Of the three, one slowly recovered, but the Doctor's wife died and my wife was invalided.

This was to be my last tour in the Cameroons. I would be posted on my return to Southern Nigeria, probably to one of the coastal provinces. No more hills and no more horses, no more hunting and no more Hausa, unless I could put into operation my long-cherished plan to secure a transfer to the Northern Provinces. Ruxton was now Lieutenant Governor, Southern Provinces, and as we neared Lagos I cabled asking for an interview. My Hausa was now fluent and my Fulani promising. Normally such transfers were only approved on an exchange basis, but in this case my languages turned the scale and my request was granted.

TWO

“THEN AS LEADERS”

Chapter 3

THE SAVANNAH KINGDOMS AND THE FULANI EMPIRE

1000-1900

I

In the late summer of 1927 I returned to Nigeria. I had been posted to Sokoto, the capital of the Fulani Empire whose overthrow had been the principal task that faced Sir Frederick Lugard's forces during the first three years of the century. The story of that empire and of the city states of Hausaland that preceded it bears very closely on the events that were to follow. So much so that a brief digression into the historic past is essential to a proper understanding of Northern Nigeria during the years that preceded independence.

Before the eighteenth century, the peoples of the Western Sudan, that vast belt of scrubland and savannah that stretched for hundreds of miles westward from Lake Chad, had lived in medieval isolation between the deserts of the north and the forests of the south. For centuries they had traded across those deserts and raided the forests in search of slaves. But where they and their people had come from and when they first set foot on the land in which they have now lived for more than a thousand years is, to this day, still a matter for speculation.

Traditionally, the first forefathers of most of the peoples of both Northern and Western Nigeria came from the east, but most of what had been written and believed about their early history has been based on legend and conjecture. Undoubtedly, a series of mass migrations took place from the Nile Valley, but the full story still lies beneath the soil on which their camps and cities once stood, a rich treasure trove for archaeologists of the future.

There seems little doubt, however, that in the days of the

early Saxon kings of England the seven city states of Hausaland were already well established. They had been founded, according to legend, by the descendants of a mythical union of east and west. According to this legend, Daura was the name of the founder state. The people of Daura were terrorized by a dragon in the shape of an enormous snake that lived in a well in the middle of the town. The hero of the legend, a prince from the east, killed the dragon and wedded the king's daughter. The well is still there and so, also, preserved in the Emir of Daura's council chamber, is the legendary hero's sword. Kano, the wealthiest and the best known of the Hausa states, also cherishes its snake legend, and it seems as though the earlier rulers were priest kings and that serpent worship played an important part in their religion.

Of the original seven states all but one survived into relatively modern times. They lay clustered together, their capitals roughly a hundred miles apart, in a circle 250 miles in diameter. To the south and to the west of them lay a further seven states, with whom the Hausa claimed either distant kinship or earlier political association.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Hausa states came under the influence of Islam, and in the wake of the new religion came courts of law, a skilled judiciary, and a defined system of taxation. With Islam, too, came literacy, at least in court and in official circles, and Hausa, from henceforward to be enriched by a generous admixture of Arabic, became a written language. Even in the 1920's Ajami, the modified Arabic script in which Hausa was recorded, was still commonly used in Muslim court books and in treasury records, and we were all required to have a working knowledge of it.

Indeed, the Hausa states and the other kingdoms of the Western Sudan, with the erudition of their scholars and jurists, the barbaric splendor of their courts, and the plumed and tasseled magnificence of their cavalry, were as advanced, in their own way, as many of the states of the Europe of their time. But to Europe there had come the Renaissance, while to the Western Sudan, behind its barriers of sand and forest, there came only war, and yet more war, until in the nineteenth century the "scramble for

Africa" began and the nations of Europe vied with each other in securing the right to trade and the right to dominate.

For many hundreds of years the plains of Hausaland had been to the Western Sudan very much what the plains of Flanders were to the armies of Europe during the same period, and with the same result. To the Hausa, and especially the Kano Hausa, who had ever been a race of merchants and traders, one war was very much like another. No sooner had the noise of conflict ceased, and almost before the dust of the departing armies had settled on the plain, the citizens would stand down from their mud ramparts and return to their booths and their dyepits, their smithies and their looms. Once again the camel caravans would move north toward the desert to carry the news that peace had come again and that the inward-bound caravans could set out without fear of attack.

Of all the many conquerors of Hausaland the Sultans of Bornu had imposed their will more often, and for longer periods, than any other power. Bornu today is no more than a large emirate. But in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, its influence was felt from the Niger to the Nile. It was Bornu that called a halt to the victorious advance of the armies of an even more remarkable race whose advent in the opening years of the nineteenth century brought the last dramatic shift in the balance of power in the Western Sudan before the arrival of the European.

For many centuries a light-skinned, straight-haired race of pastoralists had been spreading slowly eastward across the Sudan. Known to the Hausa as Fulani and to themselves as Fulbe, they claimed that their first forefathers were of the seed of the prophet Abraham. Their first recorded home lay west of the headwaters of the Niger. Here many of them were converted to Islam by the leader of an invading force of Arabs. And from here, in search of grazing and in fulfilment, possibly, of a prophecy that they would one day be reunited on the banks of the Nile, they had begun to move eastward, clan by clan, in small family groups together with their flocks and herds.

But they were not all pastoralists. Among them were scholars and jurists, many of whom took office in the service of local rulers. Superior far in intelligence and learning to the people among

whom, for the time being, they had made their homes, they soon attained positions of trust and influence.

Perhaps the most significant thing about the Fulani is the degree to which their dominant characteristics, physical and intellectual, have persisted even after many generations of intermarriage. With the settled Fulani it is more an inherent aptitude for administration that has survived the centuries than purely physical attributes. To the pastoralists, on the other hand, racial exclusiveness is still an ideal, at least in theory if not in practice.

While nothing definite is known about their origins, there is something to which the East alone can provide a parallel in the spectacle of a group of nomad families on the move with their cattle and their sheep from one grazing ground to another, their household goods laden on the backs of pack oxen. Their copper coloring, their slender limbs, their aquiline features, the straight braided hair of the girls and boys and young women; all these things are, surely, of Arabia, not of the land of their long adoption.

Whenever the Fulani settled for long periods, sooner or later they came into conflict with local rulers. So it was in the Hausa state of Gobir. During the time of the Napoleonic Wars a crisis had arisen in Gobir. Yunfa, the King, had turned apostate, and the members of his court and many of his people had reverted to the old pagan practices of their forefathers. Gobir was then the most powerful of the Hausa states, and in the courts of Yunfa's neighbor kings Islam was also in eclipse.

But not all the people agreed with Yunfa. A powerful reformist movement, which aimed at the restoration of Islam, had been gaining strength in Gobir and in the neighboring states of Kebbi and Zamfara. Its leader was Usuman dan Fodio, a Fulani scholar and theologian of wide repute. Usuman dan Fodio had Hausa as well as Fulani among his followers, and Yunfa, fearing his growing influence, determined to destroy him.

Events moved swiftly to a climax and the Fulani rose in revolt. For them it was now a choice between victory and extermination. Every advantage lay with the armies of the King, for they were numerous and well equipped. At the first big engagement, as the Hausa horsemen in their plumed helmets and quilted ar-

mour bore down, with drums rolling and trumpets blaring, on the ragged array of archers and swordsmen drawn up to withstand them, few would have guessed what was to be the outcome. But it was the lean, fanatic Fulani bowmen who were to prevail, and it was the armies of the King that were to leave the field in terror and confusion. The Fulani were fighting for the freedom of their faith and for the survival of their wives and children and for everything that they possessed. The armies of Gobir were largely slave born and had little stomach for the fight.

The news of the victory spread rapidly, and soon the heads of the great Fulani clans throughout Hausaland acknowledged Usuman as their Shehu and proclaimed him Sarkin Musulmi, Commander of the Faithful. The most powerful and trustworthy among them were appointed his lieutenants and flagbearers, and within the next two years the Hausa kingdoms of Zamfara, Kano, Katsina, Daura, and Zaria all fell and Fulani governors took office in their stead. During the same period Fulani administrations were set up in pagan territories still further to the east as far as the southern borders of Bornu.

In 1817 the great Fulani leader died. He had already divided the empire between his son Muhammedu Bello, who succeeded him as Commander of the Faithful, and his brother Abdullahi.

As each governor, with his Shehu's authority, entered upon the estate of his dispossessed Hausa predecessor he had assumed all the trappings and perquisites of the old regime. Trusted followers had been rewarded by the bestowal of the titles of the fugitive Hausa nobility, and their loyalty was further secured by the award of large tracts of land.

But though the Fulani adopted the machinery of government of their predecessors, they purified it of many of its worst abuses. There was less extravagance, ostentation, and oppression; and the courts of law were administered, and taxes were levied, no longer in accordance with the whim of the ruler.

For more than half a century the old traditions were maintained. Then, in many areas, the corrupting effects of undisputed power began to assert themselves. In Sokoto and Gwandu,¹ how-

1. Sokoto, founded by Sarkin Musulmi Bello, had become the first capital of the empire that was later to bear its name. The town of Gwandu, which gave

ever, although few could claim that the piety, austerity, and scholarship that had characterized the Shehu and his immediate successors persisted on the same high level, there was far less of the brutality and degradation that was becoming a feature of the courts of many of the Fulani governors. All of them now arrogated to themselves the status of emirs in their own right. Many now treated the border areas of their chiefdoms as no better than a breeding ground for slaves. Whole towns and villages were razed to the ground, the inhabitants being either slaughtered or carried into captivity.

Yet all the time, the old spirit was not dead. There were great numbers of devout and honest men to whom these lapses of their despotic rulers into barbarism were an abomination. But, as yet, there was little that they could do.

II

It was these same slave-raiding forays that had first brought the Fulani emirs into contact with the British, and once the reduction of the border emirates had begun, the occupation of the entire country within Britain's internationally agreed sphere of influence was only a matter of time.

Sokoto had been the last to fall. The Sarkin Musulmi had rejected Lugard's overtures, and the Emir of Kano had been equally uncompromising. In 1903, therefore, the High Commissioner decided to move northward with Kano as his first objective. The city was defended by a forty-foot-high wall and a double moat. Despite this, as soon as one of the main gates had been breached by gunfire, resistance crumbled and the troops forced their way in.

From Kano, Lugard moved on to Sokoto. The Sarkin Musulmi's forces gave battle on the open plain in front of the city's walls. But here again the story was the same. Despite the fanatical gallantry of isolated bands of horsemen, resistance soon crumpled, and so, on March 15, 1903, the capital of the Fulani Empire fell.

A few days later, the High Commissioner in person addressed

its name to the emirate, had been his uncle Abdullahi's base during the early years of the Fulani rising. Later, the capture of Birnin Kebbi, the capital of the Kebbi kings, gave his successors their permanent headquarters.

the assembled chiefs and invited them to nominate a successor to Muhammedu Attahiru, who had fled the battlefield. With their acceptance, the foundations of a friendship were laid between the victors and the vanquished of that day which stood the test of two world wars and the strains and stresses that approaching independence brought in its train.

The High Commissioner publicly declared that there would be no interference with the religion of the people, or with their customs, or with the established courts of law. The old ways would continue uninterrupted insofar as they did not conflict with natural justice. But the raiding for slaves must cease and so must oppression and extortion wherever it existed throughout the empire.

With the fall of Sokoto the thoughts of the High Commissioner turned to problems of administration. How was this vast territory with its millions of inhabitants to be governed by a mere handful of British officers? And even were it practicable for British officers to administer the country directly, would this be the best solution? In Lugard's view "the mode of life, the habits of thought and the ceremonial" of the Fulani dynasties appealed far more to the imagination of the common people than the "prosaic, business-like habits of the Anglo-Saxon would ever do."

The only possible course was a policy based on indirect rule. The process of disintegration and decay which had been set in motion by the abandonment by so many of the Fulani rulers of the precepts of their great forefathers would be arrested, and all that was best in their system of government would be retained. But it must be modernized and adapted to meet the requirements of the new age.

His decision made, Lugard proceeded to put his ideas into practice. The old system had revolved almost entirely around the person of the emir and the high officials of his household. In the place of this he substituted, in each chiefdom, a simply designed native administration, the keystone of which was later to become the *Beit el Mal*, or native treasury. Under the old system all taxes and dues had been paid directly to the emir. From now on they would be lodged in the native treasury, and after a proportion had been paid over to government the remainder would be de-

voted to the upkeep of the emir's administration in accordance with an annual budget.

This budget provided for the salary of the emir himself and for the salaries of his officeholders, the alkalai, or native court judges, the treasury and central office Malams and other clerical staff, and for police and for prison warders. The term "malam," incidentally, implies literacy in Arabic script and a thorough grounding in the precepts and practices of Islam; it is derived from the Arabic and is in common use as a prefix to a given name. Malam Muhammedu Kano, for instance, would be a man of some education. Plain Muhammedu Kano would have none. The budget also made provision for the upkeep of local roads and bridges and public buildings, and for such capital works as could be afforded.

At the same time an end was put to the old custom of granting feudal rights over vast tracts of country and all who resided there to court favorites and to other individuals. These widely scattered holdings were now amalgamated into administrative districts of manageable size, on the county pattern, and the most able of the old fief-holders were given authority over them as District Heads. These District Heads were compelled to reside within their "fiefs" and to accept full responsibility for their administration. In return, they were allotted fixed salaries in place of the pickings and the perquisites on which they had previously subsisted.

The Muslim courts were reorganized on the same lines. Each court had its own warrant which defined its jurisdiction and its powers. Proceedings were recorded and printed receipts were issued for all fees and fines received. All records were frequently scrutinized by the British Resident and his staff.

As the years passed the native administrations gradually became more efficient until the larger ones developed into completely self-contained units of local government. But not as we know local government, for at the head stood a completely autocratic ruler whose despotic authority was limited only by the dictates of his own conscience and by the degree of control exercised over him by his British advisers.

In addition to the emirates there were considerable areas,

mostly in hilly and inaccessible country, where primitive pagan communities, very similar to those of the southern Cameroons, had, for generations, successfully pursued a life of banditry, head-hunting, and slave-dealing. They were hard to bring to book. Their hill fastnesses were protected by a labyrinth of rocks and thorn-choked ravines from whose dark recesses they discharged their poisoned arrows to slip away unseen to some more distant height. From this fresh vantage they would tumble down boulders and beehives charged with angry bees on their weary pursuers. Small wonder that they had retained, and abused, their independence for so long. Areas such as these were administered directly by District Officers supported by small detachments of armed police.

Chapter 4

SOKOTO IN THE TWENTIES

1927-1929

I

When I arrived in Lagos on my way to the North, we docked not as in 1921 at the old customs wharf on the waterfront but on the opposite side of the lagoon at Apapa, where a spacious new wharf and customs sheds had recently been completed.

After clearing customs in the sweltering heat of the early afternoon I gratefully accepted an invitation from friends to spend the rest of the day in the peace and quiet of Ikoyi, the residential suburb where most of the official and mercantile community of Lagos then lived. After dinner we drove through the crowded city streets, across Carter Bridge and round to Apapa.

Here the organized pandemonium which invariably preceded the departure of the Boat Express for the North was already in full swing. Around us, beneath the tall electric light standards, their globes shrouded by clouds of insects, porters argued, fitters tapped and tinkered, and traffic clerks gesticulated with sheaves of documents. All this against a background of whistle blasts and angry hootings as the night traffic of the docks sorted itself out in readiness for the morning. As the time for departure grew closer the clamor and excitement became more and more intense until, at last, silence fell, the guard's whistle shrilled, the engine responded, and we slowly drew away.

There were only two of us in the four-berth compartment as, throughout the long night, we lurched and jolted onward, sleeping a little, but never for long, until daylight brought the twin blessings of a cool breeze and an attendant with early morning tea. Now, with the tall forests and the cocoa farms of Yorubaland behind us, we were approaching the boundary between the Northern and the Southern Provinces. Offa, in Ilorin Emirate,

the first big town across the border, had been the southernmost war camp of the armies of the Fulani Empire which had swept seaward across the plains of Hausaland more than a century before.

A few hours later, in the blinding heat of high noon, we crossed the River Niger at Jebba, by the great bridge that had replaced the original train ferry. Upstream, dark and menacing, full in the path of the swirling current, towered the Juju Rock. At its foot in 1857 the little steamer "Dayspring" had been wrecked in the first attempt to navigate the river above the town. From Jebba the train jogged onward for hour after hour through a lightly wooded, featureless countryside until, at nightfall, it crossed the tumbled waters of the Kaduna River to draw up at Zungeru, Lugard's first capital.

That night we had little sleep, for the rains were now almost over and the air was so heavy and so humid that neither the clattering fan nor wide open windows brought any relief. Soon after first light we again crossed the Kaduna River, leaving behind us the newly completed Junction Station, where the Eastern Line from Port Harcourt had only a year ago made contact with the main line from Lagos. Lugard had moved his capital from Zungeru to the healthier and more centrally situated Kaduna only ten years previously.

By mid-day the train reached Zaria, six hundred miles from the coast. From here I would travel by road to Sokoto, a further 250 miles away. Zaria was a military headquarters, and Thomas Price, whom I had known when he commanded the Bamenda garrison, sent me an invitation to dine in mess that night. He also sent, in charge of his orderly, an ancient bicycle to take me there from the rest house where I would spend the night. Hospitality, particularly toward the newcomer, was always immediate and generous in the provinces, and none were more hospitable than the soldiers.

Next morning, after breakfast, an Albion lorry drew up outside the rest house. There were practically no private cars on the road then and only a few light lorries. Humble folk like myself, therefore, rode the hard way, on a three-tonner with a trailer attached. As we jolted and swayed for hour after hour along

the corrugated gravel track, I longed for the moment when the driver would feel the need for food or relaxation at some way-side market. I could then get out and stretch my aching limbs. But of all the hazards of the road the river crossings were the worst. Our driver seemed to feel that narrow bridges, like tall fences, should be taken at speed. Sagging supports and shattered guard rails together bore witness to the need for caution, but neither these nor the frequent spectacle of a rust-encrusted derelict lying wheels-upward in ravine or river bed seemed to shake his conviction that in haste alone lay his salvation.

For the first hundred miles the countryside was well covered and well farmed, but the further north we traveled, the more sparse the vegetation, and green trees began to give way to scrub and thorn bush. During the last day's run we passed through a vast Forest Reserve. Though the word "forest" ill describes the tortured, stunted woodland which, now the rains were over, would once again be exposed to the blazing sun and blistering wind and to the annual torment of the seasonal grass fires. There were lion in the reserve and the game on which they must feed, so somewhere in the wilderness there must be drinking pools and shade, but as we jolted onward, our skins coated with red dust, along a road that bent neither to the right nor to the left, there were few signs of either.

Two hours short of our destination we began to cross a series of ridges up which the lorry ground unwillingly in bottom gear, the heat in the driver's cabin becoming more and more intense with every minute. At last, away in the distance, we could see the broad green valley of the Sokoto River. Now the farmland was continuous, and the belt of woodland in which the Government Station lay was clearly visible.

Half an hour later, swinging to the right along an avenue of young mahoganies and past a line of thatched houses, each in its tree shaded garden, we drew up opposite a long, low white building. This was the Provincial Office. Inside, clerks from the Southern Provinces in European dress busily typed or pored over registers, while on the verandas white-gowned messengers moved to and fro in dignified detachment carrying bundles of files.

Filthy and sodden with sweat I walked into the A.D.O.'s office.

I was at once made welcome, and after a bath in his house followed by lunch, I was taken over to my quarters, where further offers of hospitality awaited me. I should not have to bother about meals for at least two days. These gestures took the edge off my disappointment as I looked around me. My house had been empty for some weeks. The walls were of stone and mud mortar, the roof of corrugated iron thatched with grass, the floor of beaten earth. The door frames and window frames, from which the paint had long since peeled, were riddled with white ants. In the darker corners large holes gave warning that bandicoots and possibly snakes were already in occupation. And on the verandas and in every room there hung the sickly stench of bats. Occupation would doubtless provide a cure for most of these disadvantages, but first impressions were not encouraging.

Later, my belongings stored clear of the ground and out of reach of white ants and my camp furniture erected, I strolled forth to explore my surroundings. In those days Sokoto was a small station with a mere handful of Europeans. Apart from the Resident and Second Resident, there were the D.O., three or four A.D.O.'s, a doctor, a couple of Education Officers, an engineer, a Forestry Officer, the officers and British N.C.O.'s of the garrison, and three or four managers of trading firms, who lived a mile away in the business area.

Across the road from my present quarters lay, apparently, a golf course and beyond it the mud ramparts of the little fort. From this same fort, many years earlier, a company of mounted infantry had clattered down the road on their way to escort the Acting Resident to Satiru, a small town a day's march away whose inhabitants, led by a self-appointed Mahdi, had rebelled against the Sultan's¹ rule. But as the little column reached within hailing distance of the town gate, a frenzied mob, armed with swords and axes, had swarmed over the walls and fallen upon the troops. Within minutes, nearly all the British officers and many of their men had been cut down and the remainder scattered.

That night the remnants gathered in the fort. The nearest British force was many days' march away. Here was the first test

1. The Sarkin Musulmi was given the title of Sultan by the British to distinguish him from his brother chiefs.

of the loyalty of the new Sultan, appointed four years earlier when Sokoto first fell to British troops. The two thousand victorious fanatics only needed a leader of prestige and influence to be joined by scores of thousands more. But the Sultan never wavered. Having disposed his main forces to protect the garrison, he sent a body of cavalry on an unsuccessful attempt to redeem the situation. A month later, an avenging column arrived, and after a stubborn battle Satiru fell. The ringleaders were tried and sentenced to death by the Sultan's court, and the Sultan himself pronounced a curse on the town and its fields and all who dwelt there. I later visited the site myself. All that remains are a few scattered shards; of the town itself and its wall and farms, nothing. This was the last serious rising during the period of British rule, though lesser so-called Mahdis were to pass briefly, and sometimes bloodily, across the stage.

The local, self-styled Mahdi was no new phenomenon in Muslim Africa. He was usually a semiliterate fanatic, whose mind had become unhinged by overmuch study and too little food to the point where he persuaded himself, and the ignorant peasantry among whom he found his following, that he was the divinely guided "Messiah" for whom the world awaited. All who opposed him must be put to the sword. To orthodox Muslims, and particularly to those in authority, such men were dangerous and their doctrines anathema. Immediate arrest and execution before they grew too powerful was their customary fate. On the Nile, however, in Gordon's day, the battle had gone the other way, and we in Northern Nigeria were still feeling the impact of those faraway disasters.

Beyond the Sokoto Fort the road dipped through a belt of tall woodland into the Gardens, an oasis of green in this arid land. In the center of the Gardens a little stream, fed by perennial springs, ran through a strip of meadowland. On the further slope there was more woodland and at the far end of the meadow, terraces and flower gardens and a shady avenue led to still more gardens in which stood orange and grapefruit trees, guavas and bananas. Sokoto owed these lovely Gardens, unique of their kind in such a setting, to the genius and foresight of one of its earliest Medical Officers, Dr. Moiser.

On the ridge above the Gardens stood the Residency, a low, rambling building. Above it the Union Jack hung limply from its flagstaff, for the breeze had dropped with the approach of night. I wrote my name in the Visitors Book, the customary courtesy accorded to the principal representative of government in the province, and slowly retraced my steps homeward. My next door neighbor was Geoffrey Milne of the Black Watch, whose stories of Sokoto in the twenties were later to be published in *Blackwood's*. It was largely thanks to his help and hospitality that my first days in these unfamiliar surroundings were made pleasant. The West African Frontier Force of those times was officered from the British Regular Army. Attachment could last up to a total of ten years, and many of those who served with the Nigerian soldiers acquired a knowledge of the country and language that was far greater than that of many civil servants in the larger centers whose duties tied them to their office desks.

It was Geoffrey Milne who first introduced me to Sokoto town and the surrounding countryside, lending me one of his ponies until such time as I had bought one for myself. We moved everywhere on horseback; distances were too great for walking and private motor cars were a rarity. I had been expecting much of Sokoto, famed capital of a famous empire. Here surely, must be another Kano. But I was to find little more than a large market town. The clay is not suitable for building on a massive scale, and the red stone mud-packed walls of an earlier age were already disintegrating. The houses, mostly thatched, were squat and unsubstantial. The streets were shadeless, though here and there stood tall gaunt trees, their branches whitened with the ordure of generations of pelicans and marabou storks, which chose to spend their lives in the close company of man when not feeding in the marshes below the town. But this was 1927 and a transformation was gradually to take place until Sokoto at last became more worthy of its illustrious founder.

In the Cameroons Province it had been the Resident and the District Officer who had given the instructions and had seen that they were carried out. In the emirates and chiefdoms of the North, on the other hand, the responsibility lay with the chief and his administration, though in matters of importance he was expected

to listen to the advice of his Resident or D.O. If he were a just man and by the standards of the times progressive, this advice would be accepted. If, for some good reason, he disagreed with it, a compromise would be reached. But should he be stubborn and reactionary, or the tool of corrupt counselors, he might neglect or evade the advice given him. The outcome would then almost entirely depend upon the experience and the personality of the Resident or District Officer concerned.

We were taught that at all times the prestige and authority of the chief and his administration must be upheld and that, should the need arise to lodge a protest or to administer a reproof, care must be taken that neither he nor any of his senior officials should be humiliated in the presence of subordinates or of the public. We were taught, too, that a government officer must on no account issue a direct order. Orders must always come from the chief or his representative. Only a grave emergency would justify deviation from this rule.

Such was the policy, and both politically and practically there was no alternative. From the political point of view we were trying to train the natural leaders of the people to manage their own affairs to the point where we would be able to hand over complete control. From the practical point of view there was only one Administrative Officer to perhaps one hundred thousand Northern Nigerians. Direct administration, under such circumstances, was inconceivable. In the more primitive areas, where there was no established central authority, more direct methods were unavoidable and the proportion of Administrative Officers was far higher. But it was in the emirates that I first served, and it is to these that I now refer.

Whether the Lugard System operated successfully or whether it failed depended very largely, as I have already stressed, on the caliber of the individual Administrative Officer concerned and on his relations with the chief and his people. If a D.O. made himself fully aware of all that was afoot in his division and if, at the same time, he retained the confidence and respect of both the rulers and the ruled, wrongs could be righted and abuses could be checked. If, on the other hand, the rarest of events, a Resident or D.O. should elect to close his eyes and ears to abuses, those

abuses would grow worse and so would the sufferings of the people. Equally, were that same Resident or D.O. to usurp or undermine the authority of the chief and his administration by direct and unsolicited interference, the situation would be no better, for corrupt and extortionate practices were not the monopoly of one class alone.

It was with these precepts in mind that I set out on my first tour in the North. I was under orders to visit the southern areas of the old Hausa state of Zamfara, which had been overwhelmed by the Fulani during the days of Shehu dan Fodio and which was now a part of Sokoto Emirate. When I left Sokoto I had the prospect of nearly two hundred miles on horseback ahead of me and almost three weeks in which to complete my task. This, apart from routine duties, was to investigate the truth of a rumor that the District Heads of the Zamfara Valley were deliberately falsifying their tax census returns to serve their own ends. The salaries of District and Village Heads normally varied, in accordance with the population of the area for which they were responsible. Thus the larger the number of taxpayers the higher the salary, but should population figures be deliberately inflated, so inevitably would be the share of tax that each individual had to pay, for assessment was based on an annual census. The effect of exorbitant taxes could be mass migration from the district. Undetected maladministration could have the same effect. Thus true population figures were at times concealed in order to prevent the British administration's becoming aware of the migration and its causes.

Each morning after the day of our departure we moved off soon after first light in a flurry of dust and billowing gowns. Apart from myself and my Government Messenger, an ex-sergeant major named Hassan, there were at least a dozen others. There was the Sultan's representative, a tall white-gowned member of his personal entourage, there was the District Head himself, somewhat more flamboyantly and impressively dressed, there were two of the Sultan's Mounted Dogarai, or Household Police, with white gowns and voluminous yellow turbans, and there were, finally, a handful of minor officials and servants.

When the track was open and sandy we thundered along at a

fast canter for the first hour, the cold morning breeze bringing tears to our eyes, drawing rein now and again to cross a stream bed or a stony ridge. Later, as the sun rose, the pace became steadier lest we outstrip the carriers who had set out long before dawn escorted by a couple of the Sultan's Foot Dogarai in red gowns and red turbans.

From the day we reached our destination it became obvious that the rumors that had reached Sokoto had been founded on fact. The first task was to check the registers and counterfoils against the tax receipts held by individual taxpayers. At once discrepancies began to come to light. Many entries were found to refer to absentees or to men who had died a year or more earlier; others referred to mere children. There was also plain evidence of fraud, entries on receipts being higher than entries on the counterfoil. Inquiries and the stories of complainants brought to me by Hassan together made it plain that in recent years many families had left the area and that oppression and extortion by the District Head's personal servants and emissaries had been the cause of their departure. The register and receipt books had been deliberately falsified in order to conceal what had happened.

But to clinch the case I could do little without the co-operation of the Sultan's representative, and it soon became obvious that his main object was to divert my attention whenever embarrassing truths appeared likely to become public. He, poor man, knew only too well that the last thing that the Sultan wanted was unpleasant disclosures and that his job could well depend on my getting out of the district before I found out too much. The Sultan of that period was a bad Sultan, the only bad one who held office during our times, and his administration was largely incompetent and corrupt. It was, therefore, unfortunate that we had as Resident an amiable, though occasionally spiteful, eccentric who seemed to live in a world of fantasy. To him the Sultan, just because he was Sultan, was above criticism. He had been brought up in the old school of Lugard's early years, but to us junior officers he was utterly lacking in the hard realism and clarity of outlook that, we had always understood, had characterized that school. As a result, no notice at all was taken of my re-

port, and things went on as before. And not only in Zamfara, in other districts as well. But this was not to come to light until later.

II

Not many days were to pass before I was off on tour again, but under very different circumstances. News had come through that a large gang, operating from Katsina Province, had recently raided the French post of Tessawa, killing a French official under the eyes of his wife. When driven off by armed guards, the gang had withdrawn across the border and scattered. Names and descriptions were known, but not a single one had been arrested.

Arrangements had now been made for the Sokoto company of the WAFF to carry out a route march along the border, in liaison with the French, to demonstrate friendly relations and to "show the flag" in an area that was notoriously lawless. Hugh Richards, the O.C. troops ("Ricardo," as he was universally known), would be in command of the operation. I would accompany him as political officer.

On the fourth day out we reached the frontier and prepared to welcome the Commandant of the French post of Maradi. Tessawa, the scene of the tragedy that had brought us together, lay in his district. He rode across for lunch, accompanied by a mounted escort of Gardes de Cercle in red fezzes and baggy khaki trousers, their carbines slung across their shoulders. We gave him a ceremonial reception. Flags flew, bugles blew, the troops living up to the occasion as well they knew how.

After the formalities we got down to entertainment and to the exchange of news and views on frontier matters. Our Frenchman was a courteous but rather nervous little man, not at all typical of the tough, hard-riding fraternity that administered the lands lying between us and the desert. His government, possibly annoyed at our failure to bring the Tessawa raiders to book, had made no attempt to match our show of force, and our guest probably felt at a disadvantage as he faced, alone, this gathering of full-blooded, well-intentioned Britishers as they cheerfully massacred his mother tongue.

We did our best to make him welcome. Ricardo, in particular,

was determined that there should be no illusions as to our good will. His French was very limited, but he made the best of what there was. The Frenchman, unhappily, was neither acquainted with the virtues of "pink gin" nor disposed to submit to enlightenment. But Ricardo would have none of it. "Monsieur, c'est un occasion . . .," and relentlessly, our guest's fluttering, dissuasive gestures notwithstanding, his glass was filled, and filled again. The treatment certainly worked, but at the end of our next day's march, when he was the host, he was to have his revenge.

It had always been axiomatic with French border hospitality that the host was morally bound to supply, in lavish quantity, the national beverage of both France and Britain. Nobody had ever succeeded in convincing them that the British do not, in the tropics, drink whisky and soda at all times of the day. Furthermore, it was logical, they maintained, that solidarity of outlook could best be symbolized by alternating rounds of both beverages. Nevertheless, the more we saw of each other the more our venture proved worth while, and we finally parted with regret.

Soon after my return from the border I was posted to liaison duties with a construction team that was extending the railway from Zaria to and beyond Gusau, 135 miles down the main road from Sokoto and the center of excellent cotton and groundnut country. My headquarters were to be at Chafe, thirty miles south of Gusau. My duties would consist of little more than keeping an eye on the interests of five hundred locally recruited laborers. These men were "volunteers" in the sense that they were quite content, when called upon, to serve a term in a construction gang so long as they were adequately paid, fed, and housed. In these unsophisticated parts the mere idea of seeking employment as a laborer was entirely novel, and the present force would certainly not have come forward without pressure from their District and Village Heads. The administration, therefore, had a special responsibility toward them.

The system, apart from providing a pool of unskilled labor to supplement the regular gangs, helped to raise local standards of living and to put new ideas into the heads of a peasantry previously content with what had been good enough for their

fathers and their grandfathers before them. They earned good money, and in spending it they acquired a taste for commodities hitherto ignored or unknown. Oil lamps began to be popular, and enamelware and imported cottons began to replace the greasy wooden bowls and the rough homespun to which they had been accustomed. These tastes, once acquired, spread gradually through the community.

From Chafe, as the line crept northward, I moved with construction headquarters to Gusau, where there was a small European commercial community and a cotton ginnery. At that time the business quarter of Gusau was little more than a squalid little shantytown of mud and corrugated iron. With the advent of the railway it would soon become second only to Kano in wealth and importance as a center of trade.

Whenever I could spare the time from construction duties, I carried on with ordinary administrative touring. I was just about to set off on one of these tours one day, my Sultan's representative having preceded me, when I walked MacLennan, the engineer in charge of construction, with a very worried expression on his face. In his hand was a crumpled piece of paper. He gave it to me to read. It was from Thomas, a newly joined doctor, who had set out from Gusau that morning on a vaccination tour. On it was written, "Clements murdered by Mohammedans at Kuria." Clements, according to MacLennan, was an ex-sergeant of the Nigeria Regiment, recently taken on by the railway as an inspector on earthworks construction. Kuria was a little town, twenty miles up the line and not far from Kaura Namoda, the intended terminus.

Here was a pretty state of affairs. As I was on railway construction duties I had been told nothing whatsoever about the political situation around Kaura Namoda, an area which, so far, I had had no occasion to visit. I had not even been told the telegraphic code word. No one in Sokoto seems to have pictured that I might become involved in an emergency. This was strange, for crimes of violence were not uncommon in those days, and we had been warned of the existence of vague underground currents of subversion whose inspiration was a combination of religious fanaticism and political intrigue.

Now a murder hunt was only one of a number of unpleasant possibilities that faced me. The words "murdered by Mohammedans" in the doctor's hastily scribbled message implied more than one attacker and might even imply something far worse. Perhaps the whole countryside was affected? Or perhaps this was the work of the same gang of murderers that had raided Tessawa? A further point to remember was the existence of a number of isolated Europeans in the area around Kuria and Kaura Namoda, whose safety would now be my responsibility. Obviously I must get out to Kuria myself as rapidly as possible with whatever support I could raise in case the trouble should have spread. The only armed force available for more than a hundred miles, however, was a detachment of six Nigeria Police under an N.C.O. which was here in Gusau to guard the railway pay chests. I decided that I must have three of these men. They would be replaced temporarily by six of the Sultan's Foot Dogarai. The rest of the party, apart from Hassan and my personal staff, would consist of MacLennan and two of his subordinates. Thus organized we set off in a convoy of three ancient Model T Ford trucks.

Two miles short of Kuria we reached the forward construction camp. Here in the house of the inspector in charge, we found the doctor. On the veranda, roped up in a tarpaulin, lay the mutilated body of the murdered man. Waiting outside was his headman Garuba, who had been with him when he was attacked. No one seemed to have any idea of what could have prompted the crime, or what it might portend.

Early that morning, apparently, as Clements was traveling northward from Kuria with Garuba in the sidecar, a man had stepped forward into the roadway waving a piece of paper. Clements had stopped—to be met with a flash of steel, as the stranger, whipping out a sword from a fold in his gown, slashed at him viciously, cutting through the brim of his pith helmet and narrowly missing his face. While Garuba dived for safety, Clements, unarmed, tried to close, but a further sword stroke severed his right hand at the wrist, and as he sank helpless to the ground, his attacker, now crazy with blood lust, struck again and again, all but severing both legs and the remaining arm at knees and elbow. Then, his work completed, as he thought, the murderer strode

off down the road, still in a state of exaltation, past the walls of Kuria, waving his bloodstained sword and boasting at the top of his voice of his achievement.

Next on the scene was the doctor who, seeing an apparent maniac by the roadside screaming curses and waving a sword, wondered what was afoot. He was soon to learn, for almost at once he was stopped by Garuba who by now had emerged from his hiding place and was looking for help. Half a mile further on he saw a motorcycle and sidecar and, nearby, lying in a pool of blood, the dying Clements.

Minutes later, with Clements in the back, patched up as well as possible, the truck had turned round and was speeding for the nearest camp. And here it was that things went wrong, for there ahead, still raving in the roadway, was the murderer, threatening the oncoming truck with his sword. But the doctor was busy and the driver, terrified, swerved and drove on—to no purpose, for by now Clements was dead.

This, then, was the story as far as I could reconstruct it from the evidence available and from visits to the scene of the ambush and to Kuria itself. In Kuria I had found the Village Head and his elders sullen and disinclined to give either information or assistance. This, to my mind, was the most sinister aspect of the whole affair. There had been many people on the nearby farms and in Kuria town who had either seen the murder or heard and seen the murderer as he paraded past the walls screaming in triumph. But no one had made any attempt to help and no one would now come forward with information. While this attitude might be understandable in the case of terrified and illiterate peasants, there were men of substance on the spot, such as the Village Head, who had no excuse for their attitude.

From Kuria I drove on with Hassan to Kaura Namoda to seek the aid of the District Head. Soon after leaving Kuria we met a large armed cavalcade led by the District Head's deputy. A rumor of what had occurred had reached Kaura Namoda. The District Head had sent off this first contingent at once and was himself a short way behind with a larger body. My mind was now at rest on one point. With the District Head taking a firm line there could be little question of widespread disorder.

The next task was to try to catch the murderer, who must now be making for a nearby area of wild and sparsely populated bush in Katsina Province, a well-known refuge for criminals on the run. Therefore the sooner the news reached Katsina the better. The Katsina native administration had a reputation for drive and efficiency, and I was sure that the Emir would immediately alert all his District Heads along the border. Until this was done there was little hope of seeing the killer captured and brought to justice.

And so, having asked MacLennan, who alone had the transport, if he would take the police back to Gusau and arrange for subordinates to carry the alarm to all the Sokoto District Heads to the south of us, I set off for Katsina in a borrowed Model T Ford, Hassan accompanying me. Only once in the course of our five hours' run through the night did we stop. At Zurmi, near the Katsina border, there was a Sokoto District Headquarters. Here we left the track and, to the frenzied barking of dogs, entered the town, drawing up outside the District Head's house. Across the entrance porch lay a group of sleeping forms, for at this time of year no man spent the night in the stifling indoor heat. We roused the sleepers, and while one threw a handful of twigs on the dying embers of the fire that was their only means of illumination, another went inside to an inner courtyard to call his master.

Soon the old man appeared, wrapped in a blanket, an old skullcap on his head, his face fringed with a curling beard. At once I sensed authority. Here was the old type of Fulani warrior-administrator, courteous and alert despite the hour and despite his tale of years. He gravely listened to what I had to tell him and said that he would at once send out the alarm. We then drove on, and as we cautiously crept down a precipitous bank onto the sandy bed of the Zurmi River, there was already a thud, thud, thud of drums in the town behind us. There would be little more sleep in Zurmi that night.

Long after midnight we reached Katsina and drove through the sleeping town and up to the D.O.'s house. As I descended, stiff and sore, Emberton, the D.O., peered down from the flat-topped roof where he had been sleeping, to see what manner of travelers were disturbing him at this hour. My mission explained,

no welcome could have been kinder. Over a drink I told the whole story, while a hot bath and a hot meal were being prepared. Then, while I was bathing, Emberton dressed, got out his car, and drove down into the city to give the Emir the news. By the time he returned I was clean, fed, and relaxed, and together we coded two telegrams which we would dispatch as soon as the telegraph office opened in the morning.

Before mid-day I was back in the construction camp, which now became my base. But despite the District Head's help, we got little further. Unless the murder had been the work of a fanatic, which was more than possible, there was no motive. The dead man had an excellent reputation, there was no money involved and no possibility of mistaken identity. Such witnesses as we found were either evasive or too frightened to speak.

Three days passed in this way; then, unannounced, my Resident appeared, heard what I had to say, examined such witnesses as I had been able to assemble, and drove off to Gusau, where he spent the night before returning to Sokoto. A few days later still, Cornish, our Forestry Officer, drove through on his way to Katsina. "What have you been up to?" he said, as he drew by the wayside where he had seen me standing. "Your name in high circles in Sokoto seems to be mud." I was both mystified and upset.

Some while later I was to learn officially the tale of my misdoings. I should, it seemed, have done nothing without my Sultan's representative. I should not have used government police. I should not have used Europeans to convey messages to District Heads. "Where does the Sultan come into all this? He was the responsible authority." I had, it seemed, "endangered the patient work of years." And, finally, I should not have left my province to go to Katsina without permission.

Some years later I was told that Palmer, the Lieutenant Governor, having read my Resident's report, had recorded in my confidential file, in red ink, that "never again is this officer to serve in a major emirate." I was to be posted, as soon as possible, out of the province to a desk in a provincial office. Fortunately for me, however, rumors of what was going on in Sokoto under the surface began to filter through to Kaduna, and Palmer de-

cided to visit Gusau in person to make his own inquiries. My Resident went on leave very shortly afterward and never again returned to Sokoto.

Long before all this, I had returned to Gusau, where I found a new Sultan's representative. He was a distant relative of the Sultan himself, a fact which automatically gave him considerable authority. And with his arrival came the break we needed. An itinerant charlatan named Umaru Boka (Umaru the Quackdoctor), arrested in Katsina on suspicion, had admitted to being in the company of Clements' murderer and another well-known felon during the period immediately before the crime. He was at once brought to Gusau.

He named as the murderer a notorious bandit named Moman Eha who had terrorized the Katsina-Sokoto border for a very long time. He was at this moment, he stated, hiding in a desolate tract of bush, southwest of Katsina. As the Governor was due to visit Katsina on the following day, the sooner Emberton was warned the better. So once again the old Model T Ford, which I now had on permanent loan, rattled through the night to Katsina. On this occasion Emberton took me straight down to see the Emir, who, quite unperturbed at being awakened at this hour, at once went into action. He knew all about Moman Eha and had wanted to lay hands on him for some time. He was, we were told, not a character to trifle with, and within the hour a light lorry crammed with Dogarai, with one of the Emir's own sons (the present Emir) in charge, was on its way on the first stage of a journey which would be completed on horseback. Late the following day the wanted man was surprised and arrested, by which time I was back in Gusau.

Now that he was no longer at large, evidence began to accumulate connecting him directly with Clements' murder. Two harlots from Gusau town spoke of a night in his company two nights before the murder. They had not been paid, an offense against their code which unsealed their lips, now that they felt that they could safely talk. Three villagers had seen him on different occasions, and all had suffered from his arrogance as he made his swashbuckling way from Kuria toward the border. He was picked out at an identification parade. A stain on his gown proved, on

analysis, to be human blood from a wound and not from a woman, as he claimed. Then there was the evidence of his alleged companion, Umaru Boka.

Everything seemed to be fitting into place, but I was still not happy. Some of the evidence seemed too good to be true, so to clinch matters I decided to take my prisoner over the route that according to witnesses he had followed before and after the murder. Two or three times each night, anxious lest he should at the last moment contrive an escape, I used to visit him where he lay bound by a fire, his guards, to whom he was handcuffed, around him. Sometimes they dozed, but he never seemed to sleep. However silently I approached he would at once unfold like a snake, his eyes glinting in the firelight, to stare at me in malevolent silence until, satisfied, I went away. He was a thickset, copper-skinned man with powerful, bulging muscles, matted hair, and an unkempt beard. I had in my time had dealings with many rogues, and in all of them there was something likable. But Moman Eha exuded evil.

Each day that passed my suspicions grew that some of the evidence against my prisoner had been faked, and I returned to Gusau a worried man. On the face of things the case against him was watertight. But, somehow, there were stories that did not ring true and statements that did not fit the sequence of events. It seemed as though someone with a lot of influence and a desire to conceal the true story and the motive for the crime had been doing a lot of clever manipulation, for there was no difficulty about buying witnesses for those who had the power and means. But as far as Moman Eha was concerned, there was no doubt in my mind that murder, rape, and robbery had been a part of his repertoire for years.

But confession of failure though it was, and though I had no hard proof of what I suspected, I could not bring myself to be a direct cause of his conviction. I therefore asked to be relieved of any further responsibility for the case. In the event, the trial went forward smoothly. Moman Eha was condemned to death and hanged. Sure as I am that he had merited his fate many times in the course of his evil life, I do not, to this day, believe that he was Clements' murderer.

III

Whatever the truth of the Clements affair, its real importance lay in what came to light later. For the murder, for all its stark brutality, was little more than a symptom. Although junior officers like myself did not know it at the time, there was something seriously wrong with the Sultan's administration in Sokoto, the effect of which had begun to spread to the districts. The Resident, who should have known and taken action did nothing. It was not until the following year, under a new Resident and at the instigation of Palmer, the Lieutenant Governor, who made it his business to know, that the whole sorry story came to light.

All I knew then was that the wider our investigations, the clearer it became that in all but a very few districts within fifty miles of Gusau there had been something approaching a breakdown in authority. Bands of lawless men roamed the highways, plundering wayfarers at will, notorious criminals openly stalked the streets and market places of the larger towns and spent their nights roistering in harlots' dens and gaming shops. Many District Heads and Village Heads seemed either afraid to interfere or were themselves actively in league with the bandits.

So it was that once Moman Eha had been arrested, my new Sultan's representative and I had a large-scale purge on our hands. He had been given a dozen or more additional Foot Dogarai to help him, under the command of a tough, determined member of the Sultan's entourage, and although we had no lead from Sokoto, we got to work. These men at least were cast in the old mold and feared no one. The task took several weeks and constant touring either on horseback or in our old Ford. But it was worth it. Once the District Heads realized that they would be supported they took heart, and soon, in twos and threes, many of the more notorious of the criminal population found themselves trudging under escort toward Gusau and an exemplary sentence. The remainder betook themselves elsewhere, and ordinary folk began to move abroad less fearfully and to sleep sounder at night.

It was during this period that I acquired from Dan Fulani, my horse boy, the nickname by which I was to become known

throughout the North. Dan Fulani had been a professional praise-singer in the household of one of the lesser emirs, and he was still prone to burst into song in moments of exaltation or depression. Events around Gusau had given us little leisure for some while, and Dan Fulani, heartily sick, no doubt, of day after day of trudging after me through the heat, composed a song which began, "Mai Wandon Karife, Baban Benny"—the man with the Iron Trousers (i.e., he who never sits down, a stock expression), the Master of Benny (the name of my dog). I was never allowed to know what came next—it was probably far from complimentary. Somehow the nickname caught on and, once adopted, persisted and still persists to this day.

Chapter 5

ARGUNGU, LAST STRONG- HOLD OF KEBBI

1929-1931

I

Once the Clements affair, and all that went with it, had been disposed of, I had been sent to Kano to finish what remained of my tour of duty in the Provincial Office. On my return from leave in September, 1929, I was reposted to Sokoto, where H. F. Backwell, who had previously been Second Resident and with whom I had got on well, was now in charge.

The new Resident was not a strong personality, but he had served for many years in the province and there was little that he did not know about every important personage in it. It was no news to him that the man who seven years previously had been appointed with so much pomp and solemnity as Sarkin Musulmi, spiritual leader of millions of Muslims, had since become the dupe of charlatans and guilty of the ultimate sin of dabbling secretly in witchcraft. He was also aware that the creatures with whom the Sultan had surrounded himself had, for some while, been engaged in a systematic campaign of extortion and oppression in the districts adjoining the capital.

Before Backwell's time the leading men of Sokoto, feeling that it was hopeless to expect the Resident to intervene, had held their peace. Attempts by individuals to lodge complaints had been circumvented by threats or bribery. The Sokoto peasantry were notoriously submissive by nature, and here and elsewhere, unless Residents and D.O.'s made sure that their staff was not corrupt and that complainants were not being kept away, much evil could go undetected. But now, with a change in Residents, people felt encouraged to speak out, and complainants began to come for-

ward, first in ones and twos and later, as the news spread, in greater numbers. By the time of my return there were scores assembled around the Provincial Office.

The more the Sultan realized that his people had reached the limits of their endurance and that he would soon be called upon to answer for his conduct, the more frantically he sought the intervention of the soothsayers and renegade malams on whom he had come to depend. Strange stories began to circulate of secret sacrifices and mass incantations. Black bullocks, black goats, and even black dogs were, it was whispered, being slaughtered in an attempt to avert the inevitable.

But it could not go on much longer. At last, unwilling to face the final humiliation, the Sultan lost his nerve and fled across the border into French territory, deserted by all but a handful of followers and relatives.

The Sultans of Sokoto had all been chosen from two branches of Shehu dan Fodio's family, the House of Bello and the House of his brother Atiku. There had been one solitary digression, their brother Ahmadu Rufai. The fugitive Sultan Muhammedu had been Atiku's great-grandson. The time had now come, in the view of the Traditional Selectors, to return to the House of Bello, and a very different type of man, the devout and upright Hassan, son of the ninth Sultan, was chosen. As greatly loved as his predecessor had been feared and hated, Sultan Hassan's appointment was to usher in a new era in Sokoto.

But some while before these events I had been sent to take over Argungu Division. The manner of my briefing was typical of Backwell, who thrived on theatrical situations. "I feel reasonably happy about Sokoto now," he had said. "There is only one volcano left in the province, that is Argungu. I am sending you there." And with that piece of information I had to content myself. Personally, I had had my fill of drama for a while, but the ambition of every young D.O. was to have a division of his own and here was my opportunity.

Argungu was sixty miles distant from Sokoto by road. It had become the capital town of the Kebbi people after the loss of Birnin Kebbi, their old capital, to the Fulani from nearby Gwandu. Kebbi, though not one of the founder states of Hausaland,

had for a period been pre-eminent among them, and the Kebbi people had always been formidable warriors. Alone among the Hausa they had successfully resisted conquest by the Fulani.

When the British arrived on the scene, Sama, their king, had for many years led foray after foray on the usurping Fulani from his swamp-girdled capital, Argungu. One of the principal problems that I was to face during the next two years was how to soften the bitter hatred felt by the Kebbi for their wealthier and more influential neighbors in Sokoto and Gwandu.

Argungu Station consisted of a D.O.'s house, a rambling four-room bungalow, a bat-haunted office, a round thatched rest house, and a clerk's house. Some attempt had been made to plant avenues of trees, but only a few stunted survivors of the enterprise still maintained themselves in the impoverished soil. The cleared spaces were infested with burr grass, whose countless prickles attach themselves to the garments and persons of all who come in contact with them.

Less than half a mile below the bluff on which the Station was built wound the main stream of the Sokoto River, here termed the Kebbi River. Beyond the main stream lay a belt of swamp-land more than two miles broad. These swamps, the home of myriads of mosquitos, were flooded in the rains and bone dry, except for a few lakes and pools, in the dry season. It was ideal rice country and rice was the staple diet of the people.

Two miles downriver stood the town of Argungu, protected along its entire length by open water or by marsh. The streets were narrow and winding, the houses squat and unwelcoming. The whole atmosphere was unmistakably redolent of the stubborn independence of the people. Two things alone, I felt, would impel them toward change, pride in their past and jealousy of their Fulani neighbors. The new roads and the new public buildings now taking shape in Sokoto and, unforgivably, in their old capital, Birnin Kebbi, must have their counterpart in Argungu. What the Fulani usurpers could do they, the Kebbawa, could do also.

Here was a way in which to gain the confidence of the Emir and his people. By identifying myself with their desire for material progress and by stimulating their sense of self-respect, a

road might be found to tackle the more deep-seated problems, which would have to be faced before long. I had inherited from my predecessor plans for the replacement of the tumbledown structures in which public business had hitherto been laboriously transacted. One building had already been started in an open space outside the town. So in the manner of all D.O.'s of the period, I became architect, master of works, and later, surveyor and road engineer as well.

Argungu native treasury was far from being well endowed, but there were appreciable reserves which had accumulated over the years, and these we would now use. The new buildings, however, would have to be of local materials and the roads would not take traffic throughout the year, but the local clay bound well and the rainy season would not close the roads for long. Anyway, we would be making a start.

But soon it became plain that political, more than practical, problems must take precedence. Backwell had been quite right. There was a sullen, brooding atmosphere about Argungu and its people. My predecessor, when he handed over the Division, had spoken of rumors of witchcraft. It was said that spells were cast over all who inquired too closely into what was taking place within the inner precincts of the mud-walled warren where the Emir and his intimates lived.

There was nothing particularly surprising about this. Recent disclosures in Sokoto had deeply shocked Muslim opinion over a wide area. But in Kebbi the people as a whole still clung to many of the pagan superstitions of their forefathers. So much so that it was the common practice of the Sokoto and Gwandu Fulani to refer to them as *arna* (pagans), an insult which, if overheard, could lead to bloodshed, for there were many fanatically devout Muslims among them.

The D.O., in the nature of things, was the principal target for the local practitioners of black magic. The food that came up daily from the market, particularly the fish, was, it was alleged, regularly sprinkled with water in which the ink from quotations for the Koran and from magic spells had been dissolved. One day, during repairs to a culvert outside my house, a brand new amulet was discovered, in company with other mysterious objects. None

of this particularly impressed me, but my staff and household took it very seriously. It seemed that if we could find out who was at the bottom of this particular campaign, we would also find who was responsible for the more sinister activities at whose probable existence my Resident had hinted.

The first objective must be to get on more friendly terms with the Emir himself. Although Argungu was not a large emirate, its rulers ranked as First Class Chiefs in recognition of the political and historical importance of the chiefdom. The First Class Chiefs, who carried, in token of their office, massive silver-headed staves of office, had powers of life and death over all who came within the jurisdiction of their courts, subject, of course, to the overriding authority of the British appeal courts and to the Governor's discretion. The Second Class Chiefs, thirty in number, were also rulers of prestige and importance. Their staves of office, though smaller, were impressive and greatly prized. These First and Second Class Chiefs together administered, under British guidance, the affairs of more than three-quarters of the population of the North. The remaining quarter lived in lesser chiefdoms, in small federations, and in backward, pagan hill communities.

Muhammedu, Emir of Argungu, was a heavily built man in the later fifties, the typical athlete run badly to seed, for he had been a notable horseman and warrior in his youth. Although kindly and well meaning, he had the reputation of being weak and superstitious, and he had plainly fallen under the influence of a group of rogues and charlatans. It was typical of him that when confronted with unpalatable truths his eyes would take on a hunted look, beads of perspiration would break out on his forehead, and his plump cheeks would glisten, the Kebbi tribal scars, with which they were slashed, standing out in cruel relief. His familiars, some of them strangers to Kebbi, by playing on his superstitions and his cupidity now completely dominated the internal politics of the emirate.

But nobody would say who these men were, though hundreds must have known. The first task, therefore, must be to uncover them and discover the source and extent of their influence. The chief Government Messenger, however, proved to be unreliable, for he had too many irons in the fire of local politics himself, so

I wrote to my Resident to ask for my late messenger, Hassan, in whose integrity I had learned to trust during my previous tour in Sokoto.

A few days later, he appeared on the mail lorry very pleased to become a Head Messenger. I myself was delighted to see him and, once more, to hear that irrepressible chuckle as he reeled off story after story about his experiences. Although he was loquacious, he was also discreet and his information was always reliable. He was a Zaberma from across the French border, a devout Muslim and a strong family man. He had a broad face, fringed with a beard which ended with a little tuft on the chin, and his eyes perpetually twinkled.

From him I first began to learn about the life of the North, about the customs and conventions, about places and personalities. I learned about the daily round of the peasantry and herdsman, their joys and their sorrows, and before long I learned also what was wrong with Argungu and where the remedy lay.

But first there was to be a setback, for soon after Hassan's arrival I paid an evening visit to a cattle immunization camp, the first of its kind, established by the Veterinary Department on this side of the province as part of a campaign against rinderpest. The camp was twenty miles away, and I came back after dinner in an open Ford truck. That night the Harmattan wind began to blow for the first time that year, and the temperature along the marsh edge, where my road ran, dropped like a stone. I was chilled to the bone. I must have had the germs of dysentery hanging about me, for by early morning the night's work had done its damage and I was in a sad state. I called up the Ford and got myself on board with a few belongings and set out for Sokoto, where Noel Hall was the M.O. We had traveled out together, and as there was no hospital accommodation for me, he took me in and looked after me with great care and kindness.

A little before I fell ill with dysentery, the Airedale bitch I had brought out with me from England had succumbed to tick fever. I had injected her and she had responded, but when I was no longer there to nurse her, she had pined and died. Thus, when I returned to Argungu, it was to hear that the spellbinders in the town were claiming a double victory. Both the D.O. and his dog

had been put out of action. Although their prophecies that I would not return had proved premature, I was still very weak and they felt that they could go on trying.

During my illness Hassan had not wasted his time. Instead of settling in the messenger's quarters, he had secured lodgings in the town, and as neither bribes nor threats could deflect him, he had begun to make friends and to acquire information. Apart from what he himself had learned, I found as I got stronger that a lot of valuable gossip could be gleaned in wayside markets and from the little Fulani encampments scattered around the Station and from the boatmen who ferried me into the marsh of an evening in search of wild fowl. Once the normally shy country people learned that they would not be put into a witness box the moment that they made an indiscreet remark and that, often, the D.O. did not even appear to have heard them, they soon began to speak quite openly.

As the weeks passed, a clear picture began to emerge of what was going on in the emirate. The official council had lost any authority that it might once have possessed, and the little band of men who had become the Emir's intimates had now achieved almost complete control. One or two council members had, in self-defense, joined forces with the Emir's favorites, and the remainder had ceased to struggle except for one man, the Chief Alkali, a Moor of wide learning and upright character. His reputation had remained unsullied throughout.

Each one of the band of favorites had his own "racket," and between them both officeholders and minor officials were systematically bled until they in turn were compelled to prey upon the peasantry, for he who failed to pay faced dismissal or disgrace. It was the same with the courts. He who bribed most heavily was certain of the decision. Only the Chief Alkali refused to be browbeaten. Everyone knew what was going on. Nobody dared come forward to complain.

Drastic action was necessary. A straightforward inquiry would take too long. Witnesses would be suborned, false evidence would be fabricated. A purge was the only solution, and I duly prepared a list of the ringleaders of the cabal and their principal underlings and a catalogue of their illegal activities. This I formally pre-

sented to the Emir at a private meeting, going on to say that if he was to have my co-operation in bringing progress to his emirate, then I must have full co-operation from him in cutting out the canker which was eating away all that was good in it.

There were certain persons, I told him, whose further presence in Argungu could no longer be tolerated. Three of them, strangers to Kebbi, must leave the town before nightfall. Three others must be dismissed from his service at once and return to their villages, others must be dismissed but could remain in Argungu on promise of good behavior. If he refused there would have to be an open full-scale investigation which would result in a major scandal, and give much cause for amusement to his Fulani neighbors, the last thing that he would wish.

During the recital the old man increasingly showed surprise and embarrassment. But he did not bother to dispute one single item on the long list of charges. He only pleaded for time to consider my proposals and for leniency for particular favorites. Such a concession would have been unwise and must be refused. At length, after a long silence, he sighed heavily and agreed.

That evening he carried out all his undertakings to the full. The news spread immediately, and from the drumming and dancing in the town that night, there seemed to be little doubt that the people were rejoicing that their oppressors had been driven from among them.

II

With the "palace gang" dispersed, the traditional councilors, to whom by custom the Emir should turn for advice, began to take their rightful place at the head of affairs, and together we began to consider how far our meager revenues and limited reserves would take us in carrying out our plans for developing the emirate.

Roads were our main need. More than three-quarters of the population lived on the far side of the Kebbi marshes. Beyond those marshes lay a belt of deep, powdery sand. In the past the Emir had visited these districts perhaps once a year on horseback, for he was an old man and the going was hard. What the emirate

needed was a dry-season track around its outer perimeter and down to the Niger.

But first we must find a way across the marshes. The early maps were highly inaccurate and told us nothing. Finally, ten miles upstream, a point was discovered where there was hard ground right down to the marsh on both banks. A causeway over the more swampy sections of the marsh took us to where the main arm of the river flowed wide and deep. Here we would need a raft. The only canoes were slender dugouts just wide enough for one person, but a number of them lashed together with palm fiber rope should serve our purpose. On top we laid a deck of *gados*, rectangular contrivances of half-inch-thick guinea corn stalks woven lengthways and crosswise, which can be used as a bed, or a table, or a shutter, or for any other convenient purpose. Finally, with the old Emir anxiously watching, we gingerly loaded our ancient half-ton Ford, our hearts in our mouths. We had only a few inches freeboard, and the polers thrust delicately, edging us gradually across. But with the shallows just ahead, enthusiasm took charge. With loud cries they began to bear heavily on their poles, under went the raft and we grounded, in three feet of water, twenty paces from the shore!

But the villagers on the far bank were not to be denied their share in the enterprise. Hurling themselves to our rescue, they literally carried the old Ford to dry land, grasping it at whatever point seemed to them convenient. All apertures had been plugged with rag, so only a little water had seeped into the engine. In a very little time, belching black smoke and rattling madly, we drove off in triumph. The first motorcar had crossed the marsh.

The next stage was comparatively simple. The track was flat and all that was required was sweeping, a little tree stumping, and very occasional leveling. Within a few weeks a way was open to Bwi, the headquarters town of the next district. On our way there we again ran into trouble. Miles from any village, the old Ford clanked to a standstill. We had run a big end bearing, not very surprising in all the circumstances. Nothing daunted, however, Bawa, our blacksmith-turned-driver, wriggled underneath with his tools, dropped off the sump, reappeared, waggling his little goatee beard with irritation, took a pair of homemade shears,

cut a strip off an empty four-gallon petrol can, wriggled back again, fixed it in position, replaced the sump, and reappeared a second time with the information that "with Allah's will" we would now be leaving. And leave we did.

Bwi was a great place for dancing. That night, soon after dark, the drummers began to tap out a summons to the girls to gather in one of the open spaces in the town. Usually they chose the approaches to the District Head's house, but tonight, hoping that they would be welcome, they came to the rest house. Here they would be dancing in the bright glare of petrol lamps instead of depending on the flickering flames of a wood fire.

Only the unmarried girls danced, and if any young man were contemplating marriage, here was a chance of assessing at least the physical charms of his parents' choice, and of any other on whose outward attractions his mind might have begun to dwell.

I sat in my deck chair, sipping a drink, waiting for the evening to come alive. The drummers were at first a little sluggish, the girls a little shy. There were three drummers, their dingy gowns contrasting sharply with the brilliantly colored clothes and sparkling bangles of the dancers around them. The head drummer carried a small goatskin-headed drum under his left arm which he smote and tapped alternately, with outstretched fingers, as he drew each girl in turn into the circle of light, matching her own neat steps with a grotesque, but not unpleasing shuffle of his own. This he occasionally punctuated with a leap and a somersault, all in perfect time. In the sand, on the edge of the circle, squatted a fat man with a large drum and a little boy with a small drum. These, beaten with increasing or diminishing force, provided a rhythmical background to the evening's entertainment.

The smaller girls, the nine- and ten-year-olds, opened the dance, the eleven- and twelve-year-olds followed. Much later came the teen-agers, many of them ripe for marriage, the rhythm now in their blood, their inhibitions almost cast aside—almost, but not fully—not yet. As each girl entered the circle, barefooted, slim waisted, her companions clapped and chanted. Little by little the zest of the dancers and the appetite of the onlookers grew at the drummer's skilful command. Then the call came from the crowd for some favorite dance. The girls, shy again, protested but the

drummer insisted, and with the eddies of dust arising as he quickened and varied his complicated, syncopated rhythm, the dance started in earnest.

The girls now advanced in pairs down the center of the circle, accompanied by the drummer, their faces expressionless, their bodies erect, their heads thrown back, their bare breasts thrust forward, their feet twinkling faster and faster to the drum beat. Then, suddenly, pitch and pace changed. The dancers, no longer advancing, trod a more deliberate measure, their steps growing slower and slower until, with a thwack on the drum, the moment of climax arrived. Their faces still expressionless, their feet planted firmly together, their bodies began to vibrate. A further thwack on the drum, and to a trembling crescendo, they writhed from the hips, their bellies and their plump buttocks thrusting and rotating in turn, their eyeballs glazed and staring in simulated ecstasy. Then another thwack on the drum, and the spell was broken. Giggling self-consciously, their hands to their faces in mock modesty, the girls ran to the sheltering darkness on the outside of the circle, and two more took their place.

Of all the night noises of Africa, drumming disturbed me least, so when I had watched my fill I left a handful of small coin for later distribution and retired to bed. When the drummers and the dancers were tired they would go, and as long as there was no quarreling I was well content to let them stay. I should long since have been lulled to sleep.

From Bwi the road would run to Dendi District on the Niger. The District Heads of Dendi were drawn from a rival branch of the ruling family of Kebbi to the one at this time at the head of affairs. This branch, and all closely connected with them by birth, had one very interesting characteristic. They were far lighter skinned than anyone else, apart from the nomad Fulani, in this part of the province. In the sixteenth century an expedition composed largely of renegade Spaniards and commanded by an Andalusian eunuch had been dispatched across the Sahara by El Mansur, Sultan of Morocco. After defeating the Songhay armies the invaders had pushed forward down the Niger. When they eventually returned to Morocco, they left behind them, according to tradition, a small garrison in Dendi. These forgotten men must

have intermarried with the local ruling family, and this fact could account for the typical putty-like coloring that characterizes that particular family to this day. I certainly never encountered it anywhere else. Another pointer was that the members of this family tended to be more forceful and more gifted than their distant cousins then in power. At that time the headmaster of the Argungu School was a member of this family and was destined himself to become emir some years later.

From Kamba, headquarters of Dendi, our road would bend northeastward in the direction of Gwandu Emirate, through which lay our way back to Argungu. Now we were in more difficult country. The bush was denser, the trees taller, for we were not many miles from the River Niger up which I hoped to persuade the United Africa Company to carry salt and cloth in an attempt to open up this area to trade. We would guarantee the roads if they would establish stores. They responded imaginatively and the Upper Niger Venture came into being. But losses, not profits, were their reward, for a high proportion of the canoe loads of salt were deliberately wrecked and pilfered; the Niger Rapids provided an excuse. Indirectly, however, the enterprise succeeded, for at least it introduced the idea of an export trade into a backward area.

As we worked through Dendi, we felt our lack of maps more than ever. But our methods, though primitive, were effective. The local hunters knew, almost to a degree, just where the next large village lay, even if it were many miles away. So following the line of their pointing fingers, we would light a chain of smoke fires and then hack our way along them, checking for direction every half-mile or so, until finally we broke through onto the farmlands which surrounded our target for the day.

III

With all these new roads in his emirate the Emir decided that it was time that he owned a respectable car. It so happened that private affairs were taking me to Lagos, and I undertook to buy the car, a Ford saloon, and to drive it back for him. We came by rail as far as Zungeru, from which point there was a dry-season track

up into Argungu, by the back way. In all it was a four-day run, for the road was very rough.

On the third day, shortly before we reached our night's halting place, we were dropping into a wooded valley when I noticed that a tree trunk had been drawn across the road. Standing at the edge of the road, close to the trunk, were two men, gowned and turbanned. The taller of the two had drawn the lower folds of his turban from under his chin right up to his eyes. This was a common enough custom in the border provinces further north when the dust-laden Harmattan winds were blowing, but it was not at all usual in the Niger Valley country where we were at the time. Instinct told me that there was something wrong. So instead of driving up to the obstacle, I halted the car some forty paces distant, telling Hassan to get out and investigate. He muttered something about "those crazy fools" to which I replied, "They may be crazy, but they are not fools. Be careful."

As he approached the tree trunk he called to the strangers to help him to remove it. But, in response, they started to move swiftly toward us, the leader leveling one of the two spears that he carried, his companion whipping out a sword. Hassan at once ran back toward the car, and, waiting just long enough for him to jump on the running board, I reversed hard up the hill with a speed and precision that only imminent danger could inspire. This was no place for us, cooped up in a car and totally unprepared for such an attack. There was a rifle and a shotgun in the boot, and once we had control of these we could reconsider the situation. For the moment the only thing to do was to get clear.

Our attackers were soon outdistanced, for the hill was steep and, as I was to learn later, they had both been fasting. At the top of the hill we met Bawa with the old Ford and my loads and servants. Telling them what had happened, we got out the fire-arms and ammunition and began to drive down into the valley again. Soon we saw the two strangers climbing toward us. Stopped the car, we got out and advanced a short distance down the hill. Hassan, the experienced old soldier, moved off the road behind a tall bush, on one of the branches of which he rested the barrel of the shotgun I had given him. If we were to be compelled to fire he did not intend to miss.

When the two men had approached to within hailing distance, I shouted to them in Hausa to halt and state their business. But without replying they came steadily on, the leader an oldish man, very tall and light skinned, with one spear still leveled, the other in his left hand, his companion close behind him with his sword drawn. Hassan called to me urgently, "Maigida [Master], do not fire. Think what the Resident would say!" Hassan, I am sure, had every intention of firing himself if the strangers came on. He wished to do his best to keep me out of trouble. Twenty years later, by then an old man, he told my wife the story of our experiences that day, all his old verve and instinct for the dramatic unabated. But this time he reversed our roles. It was he who had wished to fire. I who had stopped him!

At the failure of my first appeal, having in mind that the leading figure was light skinned, I again called out, this time in Fulani, "Have you taken leave of your senses? What do you think you are doing?" By now the butt of my rifle was on my hip, the muzzle pointed at the spearman's midriff. Had he straightened his arm for the throw I should have had no choice but to fire, for he was within easy throwing distance, and remembering Clements' mutilated body, I kept my finger on the trigger.

But at the second challenge the leader halted. Very few Europeans spoke Fulani, maybe this fact made him pause. But his spear remained poised. "Our Faith is being attacked," he said. "In what manner?" I replied. "We are being driven from our mosques. We are not allowed to worship according to our beliefs. It is the white men who have done this. We have become weary of this world. Better to leave it taking an infidel with us, and so be assured of paradise."

The cause of the trouble was now plain. There had been stories of late of itinerant malams attending local mosques and practicing a form of ritual akin to that followed by the more fanatical Muslim brotherhoods. The implication of their tenets, carried to extremes, was reform by violence and the overthrow of established authority. Such beliefs were anathema to the orthodox, for they threatened the whole structure of society. The Emir of Gwandu, whose territory we were approaching, had, I knew, strong views on the subject. It was probable that the behavior of

the zealots had alarmed the orthodox and that they had been expelled by force from local mosques.

I replied that we had no wish to interfere with any person desirous of worshipping God according to his beliefs, provided that he also respected the beliefs of others. Argument followed counterargument and, finally, I offered to take the two men to the Emir of Gwandu myself so that their complaints could be investigated. If they laid down their arms I would speak on their behalf. But this I made clear: I could not guarantee that they would not be punished. Had I not halted my car in time, a spear plunging through the window would have been my first intimation that they felt themselves aggrieved.

The leader then spoke in a low voice with his companion. Then he said, "We believe what you say. We have heard about you and we wish you no harm. But we will not come with you. You must go your way. We will go ours." To this I replied that I could not allow them to go. They might well encounter some other traveler more unsuspecting than I.

We had now reached an impasse, and seeing that I was determined, their thoughts again turned to violence. The second man, short and powerfully built, kicked off his sandals and girded his gown about his waist. Any moment now, I thought, there will be a rush. But still the old man was undecided, though never once did he lower his spear arm.

And we stood. No argument would shift them. Neither could I let them go. At last, with the sun blood red as it touched the rim of the horizon, I decided that I could afford to wait no longer. Moving backward, but still keeping the two men covered, I told Bawa and the servants to stay put and not to panic. "Trouble is about to start." Then, as I moved slowly forward again, the tension suddenly dropped. For the first time the two men seemed irresolute. It was as though, with the setting of the sun, the fire had gone out of them. For a moment they conferred; then, placing their arms by the roadside, they asked permission to return to the bottom of the hill. There they had left their mats and water bottles, and it was time for prayer.

Relieved beyond measure, I returned to the car and put away my rifle while Hassan, still armed and alert, escorted our late

adversaries to the valley. There I later followed them to find all three engaged in an amicable conversation in which I joined. No one could have been more friendly. There were even polite references to my fluency in Fulani, which, while still pretty makeshift, had probably, though quite fortuitously, caused the momentary hesitation that averted a clash at our first direct encounter.

The two men, Malam Shehu and Malam Garuba, were teacher and disciple. They had just completed a period of voluntary fasting. This, together with the hot weather and their religious convictions, accounted for their behavior. All was now well. The District Head at our night's stopping place took good care of our guests, for I could by now scarcely think of them as prisoners. The next day I handed them over to the Emir of Gwandu and continued my journey to Argungu. Later, they were brought to trial and sentenced to terms of imprisonment.

But we had not heard the last of Malam Shehu. Some months after he had completed his sentence he was responsible for another incident. One evening a gang of laborers who had been working on a road in the marsh a mile or so from Argungu came tumbling into town, gibbering with terror and spreading panic among all whom they encountered in their path. They carried a tale of a devil twelve feet tall, with a beard a yard long and flame darting from his eyes, who had suddenly rushed upon them and driven them from their work, cursing them roundly for serving the infidel.

It so happened that both the Emir and the D.O. were absent on tour. But the Emir came in late that evening to learn to his astonishment that the population of his capital was in a state of terror and that a mass exodus was only a matter of time. He first firmly restored confidence and then set out to discover the cause of the panic. It was our old friend Malam Shehu.

His frenzy over, he became his charming self again. But twice was too much, and he was duly certified and confined in Sokoto Lunatic Asylum. Here I met him when I returned to Sokoto in 1938 as D.O. He at once greeted me as an old and valued friend. On my weekly visits to the prison and asylum I always made time for a few words with him. He was an erudite scholar and a

man of great personal charm, but when the frenzy was on him, he had the power to whip an ignorant rabble into hysterical violence, and we dared not let him go.

IV

The Kebbi people were essentially river folk, and in their element, the water, they were unsurpassed. There still survive, amid the marshes, the descendants of the original river clans who had lived on the Niger and its tributaries for centuries before the Kebbi people came this way. These folk, the Sorkawa, possess complete authority over the crocodile that haunt their rivers. They can handle the largest unscathed, and not only the crocodile of their own rivers. Even in those days they were known as far afield as the Nile Valley, where, on their way to or from the Pilgrimage, they had been known to get rid of man-eaters in the most unceremonious manner merely by entering the water and bringing them back captive and alive.

A visiting Governor once expressed polite disbelief when told about this strange power by the Emir. After a lapse of time, another visit took place. The Emir had not forgotten. Waiting until the end of the formal interview, he announced that he had one more matter that he wished to raise. Thereupon, at a signal, in staggered a group of sweating fisherfolk, bearing fourteen feet of writhing, squirming crocodile, gagged, but very lively. Then, at a further signal, with typical Kebbi disregard for mere niceties, they cast their heaving burden at the great man's feet. To such an argument there was no reply.

I served in Argungu for almost two years, and when the time came to go, unlike many D.O.'s, I left with great reluctance. The Kebbi governing classes of those days seemed to have a natural aptitude for getting themselves into trouble, for they rarely permitted moral scruples to interfere with personal inclinations. And, as compared with the Fulani, their NA officials were *farouche* and incompetent. But for those who declined to take their failings too seriously, there was much that was very likable about them. Once the façade of sullen obstructiveness had been penetrated there was much to admire and much that was endearing.

There was their pride in their past and their refusal to be outshone by their wealthier neighbors. But above all there was their wholehearted response once they felt that they had really found a friend and an ally. Those whom they accepted they never forgot.

Almost thirty years later, a year after I had retired, the son of the Moorish Chief Alkali of my time, by then himself a member of the Emir's council, wrote to say that the old road down which I used to ride from the market place toward the waterfront to see old Hassan had been rebuilt and had been named after me Mai Wandon Karife's Road. It could with equal justice have been named after Hassan. Argungu owed the old man, now dead, a very great debt. Without his help I could have done little.

Chapter 6

EMIR USUMANU OF GWANDU

1931-1934

I

One blistering hot day in March, 1931, I moved house, at very short notice, from Argungu to Birnin Kebbi. My transfer had come as a surprise. This was the year of the Great Slump. World market prices for groundnuts and palm oil and the other products on which Nigeria depended for her revenues had dropped heavily, and the government, faced with an economic crisis, had decided on a policy of retrenchment. A large number of civil servants were to be prematurely retired, and among them, the present District Officer, Gwandu. In addition, there was to be a 10 per cent levy on our salaries, and recruiting from Britain was to be brought almost to a standstill.

The effects of this policy of retrenchment and the halt in recruitment were to be disastrous to Northern educational advancement, and many years later, as the demand for political advance rose in intensity, we were to find ourselves at a hopeless disadvantage for lack of trained and educated men and women. In the South the Christian missions provided almost all the educational institutions. The Muslim North had no such source to draw upon.

But my mind, as I drove along the dusty, potholed road, on my way to my new home, lay in no such channels as these. If I thought of anything, apart from the springs of my car—for the road was in an appalling condition for lack of money—it was of the drastic change in circumstances that I was about to experience in exchanging a Hausa administration for a Fulani administration. The direct approach and the shock tactics that had been so necessary in Argungu would not do at all in Gwandu Emirate. The Fulani were more subtle in temperament than the Hausa

and more sensitive, and I should need more patience and more finesse.

Gwandu Division was one of the three largest "independent" divisions in the north. By "independent" I mean that it was in the direct charge of a D.O. and not a Resident. Its revenues were three times those of Argungu, and its population at that time was over a quarter of a million. The Emir, as the descendant of the ruler of the Western Fulani Empire, ranked third in the chiefly hierarchy, and in deference to his importance Gwandu had, for an isolated division, an unusually generous allotment of departmental officers. There was a doctor, an engineer, an Education Officer, and, ten miles away, a Veterinary Officer. An agricultural Officer and an A.D.O were to be posted to us within a few weeks. I was extremely fortunate to have been given so large a division so early in my service, and even more fortunate to serve with such an outstanding emir.

Usumanu, sixteenth Emir of Gwandu, was one of the most dynamic and, at the same time, most lovable personalities with whom I ever worked. Erect and broad shouldered, the very personification of the warrior prince, his hawklike features and his flashing eyes terrified those of his subjects who inadvertently, or injudiciously, crossed his will. Yet, despite occasional outbursts of outrageous autocracy, he was a generous-hearted man and a great enthusiast. Anyone who could assist him in any project that would redound to the greater glory of Gwandu was his friend for life.

At the time of my first arrival, he was busily engaged in a major town-planning operation, for the rehousing of the NA offices and institutions which we had undertaken in Argungu had been taking place on a larger scale in Birnin Kebbi. There was so much more that we would have liked to do, but with funds limited to a few score thousand pounds, we were severely handicapped, and our M.O. and the other departmental officers were in no better case. Only the central government in faraway Lagos could give provinces such as ours the skilled staff and the funds that we needed for so large a population. But as far as the central government was concerned, it scarcely seemed as though we even existed.

We were, however, well used to being thrown upon our own

resources, and town-planning, using local materials, gave scope for some of the improvements that we wished to bring about. For a long time senior British officials had preached the virtues of space and fresh air, of cleanliness and efficiency. But so long as the NA staff, from the highest to the lowest, worked and lived in dust and darkness in the center of the town, such talk had little meaning. It was time we broke away from these conditions of medieval squalor and created a "garden suburb" outside the walls of the old town. The Emir had been enthusiastic from the start. He would give his people an example by abandoning the house of his forefathers and building himself a new and spacious residence in the new suburb which would be called Nassarawa. All his leading officials would follow him.

This was the situation that I found when I first went to visit him. Much had been completed, but roads were still being laid out, avenues of trees were being planted, foundations were still being laid. Emir Usumanu never did things by halves, and he was quite determined that the experiment would be a striking success and an object of envy to his brother chiefs throughout the North. His own house was surrounded by a mud wall fifteen feet high and a mile in length. Inside there was a succession of courtyards and buildings, some mud roofed, some thatched, but all imposing and many of them original in design. In one large courtyard lay the stables where between twenty and thirty horses were picketed. In others, orange and grapefruit trees had been planted. Beyond these there was one in which a formal garden had been laid out with a pond in the center in which were a number of baby crocodile. Nowhere else in the North was there anything like it, for Emir Usumanu's contemporaries, the Emir of Katsina alone excepted, had remained content to live in the disorganized, tumbledown splendor of their ancestors. But one by one they were to follow Gwandu's example.

Even ancient loyalties had been invoked in order to make Nassarawa a success. Although the old Western Fulani Empire had long ago dissolved into its original component parts, great chiefs of the stature of Ilorin and Bida had not forgotten their allegiance to their onetime suzerain. Each year an exchange of gifts took place, mettlesome horses or costly gowns, in token of the

past. Now, with all this building to be done, Emir Usumanu did not hesitate to send 350 miles to Bida to ask for thatchers, for there were none more skilled in the whole country.

As soon as I had settled into my new station I began to try to come to terms with the Emir and his administration. Before coming to Gwandu I had been personally involved in the public washing of some very dirty political linen, both in Sokoto and in Argungu, and it was clear to me that many stories, true and untrue, would have preceded me. I must, therefore, make my position clear from the start. So, at my first formal interview, I told the Emir and his council that I had come to help and not to make mischief. Whatever stories about his administration that I heard, whether they were pleasant or unpleasant, I would pass on at once to him and I trusted that he would be as frank with me. I wished him to understand that I did not, and would not ever, employ spies and informers, still less use members of my domestic staff for the collection of information. Should the Emir or any of his high officials ever hear of any person posing as my secret agent they were to arrest him and bring him to trial at once. Such information as came my way would come from messengers, from complainants with genuine grievances, and from casual conversation or from gossip overheard in farm and market place, on the open road or hunting in the bush. As a first step in our relationship we must be able to trust each other absolutely. We should doubtless have our disagreements, but with mutual confidence they would be resolved. The Emir at once responded to my approach, and from that day onward his friendship and loyalty never wavered.

In strong contrast to most of Argungu and much of Sokoto during the four years that had just passed, Gwandu was firmly and skilfully administered by the Emir and his District Heads. He was too big a man to tolerate the intriguers and tale-bearers that infested the immediate circle of so many great chiefs. Furthermore, he was deeply respected in the districts. His District Heads were mostly able and honest men. The less able and the less honest were careful to keep out of trouble. Emir Usumanu's royal rages were a byword, and no man in his senses crossed his will of set intention.

But even in Gwandu there was a great deal of crime in the more remote districts where there were no motor roads. Roving bands of criminals, the most dangerous of which was personally led by a renegade brother of the Emir, were known to haunt the outskirts of large market towns, raiding and robbing as opportunity offered.

The Emir was continually receiving complaints from the victims of these gangs, and he was very concerned at the inability of his administration to deal effectively with them. The old Dogarai Force of the chiefs had recently been completely reorganized. A handful of Mounted Dogarai were retained as guards and couriers, while the Foot Dogarai, now increased in numbers, were gradually being converted into a trained and disciplined body modeled on the Nigeria Police.

The Emir and I both felt that what we most needed was a disciplined mounted force. Why could we not have Mounted NA Police? The more the Emir thought about the suggestion, the more enthusiastic he became. He would mount the men himself from his own stables. Daniel, now our Resident, was the very man to advise us. He was a hard-riding character with a red wig, frequently worn askew, who loved horses almost as much as he loved the North and its ways, in which he was deeply versed. Not only did he give us permission to go ahead at once, he also told us where we could get secondhand cavalry saddlery and equipment. The Emir was delighted and we soon enlisted a score of likely men, including two former mounted infantrymen of the Nigeria Regiment. Their unit had been disbanded soon after the First World War, but there were still a few around who were active enough for further service. As soon as the saddlery and the lances arrived from England we started serious training.

Sokoto NA also decided to form a mounted force. They could afford a far larger one than ours, but we were first off the mark and had the great advantage of having an ex-regular cavalryman as instructor. Dickie Carr, our Education Officer, a tough, ginger-haired little man, had done most of his soldiering in a Lancer Regiment; this project of ours was right up his street, and he devoted all his spare time to insuring its success. He first laid out a riding school beside the race course which ran between the Sta-

tion and the walls of the Emir's residence. Evening after evening the story was the same. Down the road from the Station trotted Dickie, jaunty and erect, while toward him, the dust billowing behind him, drove the Emir. Awaiting them, squatting on the grass by the wayside, were the new recruits, each holding the reins of his newly acquired mount. Then, for an hour, Dickie instructed while the Emir encouraged, or reproved, with blistering effect, should anyone fail to put his heart into his riding.

Dickie Carr's standards were British cavalry standards, and the Emir backed him enthusiastically in insisting that nothing less would do. After three months we had started show-jumping and tent-pegging and gymkhana events in general. We then issued a challenge to Sokoto to send over a team of twelve to take part in a two-day competition, a challenge that was at once accepted.

The Sokoto team was in charge of the Sardauna, the Sultan's nephew and the Council Member for Police. The title of Sardauna, originally bestowed on one of the principal war leaders of the Fulani army, was normally held by a close relation of the ruler. Abubakar, the Sardauna of 1934, was a young, slimly built man with typical Fulani features, dignified bearing, and charming manners. He had a strong sense of humor which, under very little provocation, rose readily to the surface.

Our gymkhana was a great success, especially as the Gwandu team defeated Sokoto by a narrow margin. We were all delighted, for not only had they practiced very hard, their success made them feel that they were, indeed, a *corps d'élite*. Soon, in twos and threes, they rode off into the bush, with orders from the Emir to harry the robber bands that had for so long plagued the peasantry until they found the land too hot for them. And so it was. After a fortnight or so, in twos and threes, they came jingling back again, and before them in handcuffs came their prisoners, the Emir's renegade brother among them. Crime in Gwandu had, at least for a while, ceased to pay.

When not on duty in the districts the Mounted Yan Doka provided an escort for the Emir on ceremonial occasions, and for the Lieutenant Governor or the Governor on their rare visits. They made a brave sight with their gleaming lances and their

fluttering pennons. Long, long later their successors were to ride before the Queen.

During my first months in Gwandu I completed an economic study of the everyday life of the cattle-owning nomad Fulani, in the western part of the province. There were several million head of these cattle in the North, almost all owned and pastured by nomad or seminomadic clans. They represented a sizeable proportion of the wealth of the country, and there were a few of us, administrators and Veterinary Officers, who were convinced that this wealth was being taxed out of existence. The Fulani were, we were sure, being forced to sell for slaughtering appreciably more than the annual increase in their herds, after disease and the ever importunate hyena had taken their toll.

The *jangali* or cattle tax, a flat rate of two shillings a head for every beast, young calves excepted, seemed small enough, but the whole country was so impoverished at that time that those of us who knew the Fulani well thought it was far too high. For instance, a cow with a calf at foot could be bought for as little as forty or fifty shillings, and the market price for dairy produce was equivalently low.

I spent several weeks completing this survey and found the work absorbing. The cattle Fulani, once they give their confidence, and this they will only give to those who know their language and understand their ways, are a friendly and a fascinating people. The Hausa will say to the European who is fluent in his language, "You speak Hausa well," but the Fulani will say, "You are a Fulani" and accept him as one of themselves, so long as he respects their conventions and their susceptibilities, for they are both shy and sensitive. In this case their trust was not misplaced, for my findings were accepted by the Lieutenant Governor and the tax was reduced by a quarter.

II

While on leave I had acquired another secondhand Rover, a sports coupé. This remarkable car was to carry me for many thousands of miles, with no fuss, across every kind of country, into and out of rocky and precipitous ravines, through deep sand and

deeper mud, along hillside tracks, sometimes tilted at angles that its designers, I am sure, had never contemplated. It did not even seem to mind being towed through flooded swamps and swollen streams. A change of oil and a wipe down and, after a few smoke-belching miles, it became its old willing self again. It towed a trailer, built for me by Sokoto NA workshops on the back axle of a derelict half-ton truck. In this trailer all my touring loads could travel with ease. Thus I became entirely self-contained. Should a bridge collapse or a river flood in my path, all I needed was at hand, even electric lighting, for I carried a large spotlight on fifty feet of cord which I could hang to a convenient branch or rafter.

My investment had at once paid handsome dividends, for Gwandu, even more than Argungu, badly needed more motorable roads—and the control of crime, the close administration and the increase in trade that such roads bring in their train. A beginning had been made in the time of my predecessor. But much more was needed and the Emir and I began to dream dreams.

Our joint ambition was to complete the road system of the emirate by finding a way through to the districts fringing the Niger which had hitherto been thought to be inaccessible by motorcar. One of these districts lay on the far side of the river, and to the west of it and bordering the French frontier was the small Independent District of Illo, a historical and administrative anachronism that was a constant cause of worry to the District Officer, Gwandu.

During the decades before the British occupation, successive Chiefs of Illo, protected by river, marsh, and forest, had successfully resisted all attempts by the neighboring Fulani to subjugate them. Thus, when a British expedition laboriously poled and paddled its way upstream intent on striking northward into Fulani territory, the Chief of Illo of the time was very willing to help in any undertaking that would embarrass the Fulani. For his services his independence was underwritten and he was made a Second Class Chief. The present Chief of Illo, however, though a most personable and magnificently built young man, had a tendency, if left unvisited for long, to divert the revenues of his tiny treasury into projects of a personal nature. There was another

reason, too, for making Illo more accessible. It lay on one of the oldest trade routes in this part of the world, and we were continually hearing stories of donkey trains being bogged down and of goods being lost in the journey across the marshes on their way to and from Dahomey and the Gold Coast.

As matters then stood, a tour covering these districts could take from ten to fourteen days traveling by horse, canoe, and at times on foot. What the Emir and I now planned was to extend the present road system in the center of the emirate as far as, and beyond, the Niger. We would then loop westward for forty miles, crossing the Niger again near Illo. From this point we should be able to link up with an existing road that would bring us home.

The Emir himself would push through the eastern section of the new road, while I would be responsible for the western section that led toward Illo. But first we must arrange for a reconnaissance and an estimate of costs. Although labor was very cheap, and although we would be doing little more than improving existing trade routes and cattle tracks over much of the route, there were sections near the Niger and its tributaries that would require a great deal of work. We could scarcely hope, this year, to gain approval for expenditure to cover more than the easy sections and a rough trace through the more difficult terrain. The big operation would have to wait until next year's budget.

One of the Emir of Gwandu's more endearing, but often disconcerting, qualities was the speed and vigor with which he got to work on any project in which he took personal pride and interest. I had yet to learn that once such a project was agreed between us, unless I kept an eye on him, he would at once apply all his boundless energy and all the resources of the emirate to carrying the work through to completion. To problems of finance and accounting he was supremely indifferent. It was the D.O.'s business to look after that sort of thing.

And so it was in this case. I returned from my reconnaissance of the Illo route to find the old man, very pleased with himself, waiting to tell me that not only had he pushed through a track to a ferry point on the Niger, he had actually got his own car down to the water's edge. He had moved a disused steel pontoon ferry seventy miles down the Kebbi River in readiness for the

crossing, and he was now awaiting news that the loading and unloading ramps on either bank of the Niger were complete.

This was all very fine. I, the D.O., must now explain to a ruffled Resident how it was that our road "vote," already all but foundered, was now well and truly overspent, and with three months of the financial year yet to go. And, in those days of exigence and highly centralized control, there were few sins that a D.O. could commit that were more nefarious than overspending a vote. Even the Resident himself had little or no discretion. Supplementary expenditure of even a few pounds outside the native treasury estimates for the year required approval from Kaduna and the prior submission of detailed forms in triplicate, accompanied by convincing reasons why the expenditure could not wait until the next financial year.

Well, there it was, so off I went, cap in hand, to Sokoto, my head bowed to the blast that I felt to be inevitable, for L. S. Ward, who had taken over from Daniel, was reputedly somewhat of a purist in matters of native administration finance. However, I was let off lightly, for the Illo project appealed to his imagination. Not only did he secure approval for the release of Gwandu Native Treasury funds sufficient to cover the work which had already been completed, he also got agreement to the more elaborate and more expensive section across the marshes toward Illo. Illo and its troubles had featured so frequently in correspondence between Sokoto and Kaduna in recent years that any scheme that would insure closer administration was welcome.

The crossing of the Niger opposite Illo, our main task, would have to be carried out in two stages. First there would be an approach road across the marshes to the point where deep water would give access to the main stream. Then would come the actual crossing by ferry. This would probably be alarming but not difficult. Our problem would be to reach the main channel, for the marsh at this time of the year was entirely under water except for a number of tiny islands. The only possible way across would be to construct a series of causeways connecting such of these islands as suited our purpose. These causeways would have to be revetted and bridged at frequent intervals to let the current through.

Fortunately the area was thickly studded with borassus palms, which made our task much easier. These great trees, thirty to forty feet high, played a vital part in our construction program. The male palms are impervious to white ants, and where all other local timber would rot, they could endure for years, even when totally submerged. They can be used whole as bridge girders or split into sections for decking or revetting.

But when we started to get down to business we ran into trouble at once. The river people declined to co-operate. They alone knew where the water was shallow and where it was deep and which was bog and which was submerged sand, but they felt, with some justification, that a motorable track across the marsh would put them out of business as guides and ferrymen. There was only one way of finding a way across and this was by personal exploration, using our bodies as gauges. So a small party of us by trial and by error, wading now knee deep, now chest deep, now waist deep, found the shallowest route from island to island, staking the line as we went. It was a crazy thing to do, but I had not then heard of bilharzia and I was sure that there were no crocodile in such weed-clogged water

Every fifty feet or so we put in a small bridge, and in the center, as the waters began to run more swiftly, we constructed larger ones. Our first causeway was our longest, and it did not seem possible that we should ever reach our goal, a small hummocky island almost five hundred yards distant. But yard by yard the road snaked across the lagoon, enthusiasm mounting as the laborers got into their swing, each gang vying with its neighbor as it strove to complete its allotted section first. We employed a pair of drummers for every gang of twenty men, and these were often supplemented by unpaid volunteers. A gang working in time to the rhythmic beat of the drums and the chanting of the drummers, to which they themselves supplied the refrain, shifted soil and undergrowth with a speed that it was a joy to watch. They never seemed to pause from dawn to dusk.

Long before first light the thud, thud, thud of the drums summoned them from their encampments, and they hacked and stacked and carried, with barely a break for food and drink, until it was too dark to see. Then, still accompanied by their drum-

mers, they wound their way homeward to where, by the light of huge fires, a gargantuan meal of meat and corn and rice awaited them. Then they feasted to the rhythm of the drums until, sated and exhausted, they flung themselves down by the fireside to sleep until first cockcrow heralded another day.

We all slept on the job, though I had to run back to Birnin Kebbi every few days to clear my office desk of the mail that had accumulated in my absence. These, luckily, were the days before the curiosity of the outer world in our affairs tied the D.O. more and more to his desk and raised an ever mounting barrier of paper between him and the people of his division.

Within a little more than three weeks the approach road was completed as far as the point from which we reckoned we could pole our ferry to the Niger. But as I drove toward the embarkation point, I began to feel dubious. The Niger in flood was a very different proposition to the placid waters of the Kebbi River, the scene of my last venture by homemade ferry. Anyway, this time we had evolved a far more workmanlike craft. A solid deck of palm rafters had been securely lashed amidships to three thirty-foot canoes. It certainly looked strong enough, and with our polers and road laborers firmly holding the ferry in position, I gingerly drove on board.

Once the wheels were safely wedged we cast off. With the polers cheerfully chanting as they thrust the unwieldy craft through the trailing weeds we slid onward through winding corridors of tall grass. The canoeman did not seem to be worrying. Why should I? Now and again some underwater obstruction swung us broadside to the channel, but, shouting and grunting as they heaved, the polers thrust us free. As we twisted and turned we passed, on one side or the other, little islands on which grew clumps of borassus palm. But for the most part we moved through a seemingly unending wilderness of weeds and tall grass. At last the current quickened and I began to wonder again what the next stage was going to be like. It could not be far ahead. Suddenly, and without warning, we broke free. Before us lay half a mile of tumbled, foam-flecked water across which we must now pass.

Some way downstream on a grassy ridge, looking very remote

but very inviting, stood Sabon Gari rest house where I hoped to spend the night. But by now we were in deep water and the current had taken charge. The canoemen, exchanging their poles for paddles, sat down and strove furiously as they made for the far side. This we must reach before the swirling current carried us downstream below the little inlet where we were to disembark. So, with two men baling feverishly and with their companions grunting and sweating as they drove with their paddles, our crazy craft pursued its drunken progress across the face of the waters. Little by little we gained ground as past us floated islands of grass torn from the banks and whole trees, their limbs and roots thrusting upward.

At last, with a very little to spare, we slid, miraculously fore-end foremost, out of the main current and into the harborage. But even here the stream ran swiftly, and the villagers waiting on the bank were hard put to it to hold us alongside with the ropes we had cast ashore until reinforced by our crew, who leapt ashore leaving me alone on board with my car.

Next morning the nine-mile run into Illo gave little trouble, apart from difficulty in crossing a bridge so narrow that once on the mud-caked deck there was no room to get out on either side to check the alignment of the wheels. To leave my car via the bonnet and the radiator was an unusual experience, though the road laborers, who had never seen a car before in their lives, probably thought that this was normal practice.

The next three days were spent on Illo Native Treasury accounts and kindred matters. The results were no more depressing than I had expected, and in any case, in future I should be able to get here more swiftly and more frequently. After what lay behind us, the forty-mile loop through the bush to the downstream ferry and the run northward on to the main road system were simple. The south circular dry-season road was now open.

One of our most enthusiastic supporters in the campaign to improve the communications of the emirate was the Emir's brother, Yahaya, District Head of Kalgo. He was in his way an even more remarkable man than his elder brother. The pair of them typified the outstanding facets of the Fulani character. Usumanu was the warrior-administrator, worldly in his ways and worldly

in his outlook. Yahaya on the other hand was deeply religious, more scholar ascetic than soldier. He was as spare as his brother was broadly built, and I pictured him as being very much in the mold of his great grandfather, Malam Abdullahi, brother of Shehudan Fodio and the first ruler of Gwandu. He was the first District Head to drive his own car, an Austin Seven, in which he toured his district accompanied only by two attendants. Such absence of ceremony, particularly on the part of an emir's brother, was at the time unique. I traveled with him, from time to time, in that same little car, and it was very plain that despite the simplicity of his ways his authority was unquestioned. I was in later years to meet other District Heads who eschewed the pomp and vanity so dear to their class, but no one of them was so loved and so respected as Yahaya, future Emir of Gwandu.

At last the time came for me to go home. I had completed three tours in Sokoto Province, and when I returned I should, I knew, be posted elsewhere. My leave-taking with Emir Usumanu and his council took place in the engineer's house, where I had moved when my successor came to take over the division. I felt as though I were being parted from a family into which I had been accepted. For all of them I had conceived a deep affection, above all, for the old man himself. The bond between us had grown strong and enduring, and as he drove away, he threw the folds of his cloak across his face. I was to come back to Gwandu many times, but this was the last time that I saw Usumanu. He died five years later and his brother Yahaya became Emir in his stead.

Chapter 7

MUSLIM CHIEFS AND PAGAN SUBJECTS

1933-1936

I

On my return from leave I was posted to Zaria, which lies on the central plateau of the North at an altitude of two thousand feet. After the fierce heat of Sokoto it seemed like a health resort. For the first time in my service I had a modern house with two stories and a spare bedroom. We still depended on wells for our water, our sanitation was of the sand-and-bucket type, and our lighting came from pressure lamps. But, compared with the past, it was luxury.

Zaria Province had many problems entirely new in my experience. The emirate was the home of two sharply contrasting cultures. While the northern half was entirely Muslim, the southern half was a complex of pagan communities differing in language and customs, though Hausa was their lingua franca and there were Muslim settlements at all the principal centers. In the center of the province, fifty miles to the south of us, lay Kaduna, capital of the North, which was administered as part of Zaria Province.

Zaria, or Zazzau, to use the name by which it was first known, was one of the original seven states of Hausaland. It owed its early prosperity largely to the traffic in slaves for which its central situation particularly suited it.

Around Zaria city itself huge outcrops of bare granite dominate the countryside. Tumbled masses of rock lie crazily perched one on top of another in precarious disorder. Tufts of grass and straggling bushes protrude from clefts and crevices. Here and there tall trees, rooted in isolated pockets of soil, stand guardian

over the ruins of hilltop hamlets. In each of them some primitive community had once fortified itself against the forays of mounted raiders from the north in search of slaves.

Morgan, my Resident, was bald, benign, and thoughtful. He was at this time planning a radical departure from the conventional policy hitherto applied to the non-Muslim communities in the Muslim emirates. Sir Donald Cameron, the originator of this change in policy, had assumed the Governorship of Nigeria two years earlier.

Since early days the conventional emirate system had usually been imposed on all communities in the North, whatever the pattern of their traditional social organization. In the emirates, authority in the Muslim areas devolved from Emir to District Head, from District Head to Village Head, and so on downward to the individual citizen. But in the more loosely organized pagan areas, no man lightly accepted the overlordship of his fellow; in consequence, control was exercised through an alien District Head, usually a Fulani, arbitrarily appointed for the purpose. Up to a point this system worked, for it provided ordered administration where before there had been inertia or chaos. Its great flaw lay in the fact that it was static; it gave no opportunity for the pagan communities to develop along lines natural to themselves, it contained no seeds of future progress. And should the arbitrarily appointed District Head despise his charges and regard them merely as something to fleece and oppress, it possessed no redeeming features at all.

Now the new Governor had rejected, out of hand, the idea that the "sealed pattern" emirate was not only the best but the only form of administration for the North and that all communities must be taught to conform to such a pattern. He insisted that each one must order its affairs in the manner best suited to its social structure. It was now the task of the Resident and his D.O.'s to unearth the old traditional organization and encourage self-respect and self-control among the little pagan tribes and hill communities of which more than half the population of Zaria Emirate consisted. Having done this, the Governor ordained, we must insist that an adequate degree of autonomy in local affairs

be granted by the Emir to the clan and tribal councils into which we proposed to breathe life.

I was now to find my earlier experiences in the Cameroons to be of great value. I had worked among people of this type before and had learned to understand enough of their outlook not to feel completely frustrated at their alternating phases of apathy and intransigence. We would have indirect support from the Christian missionary bodies established in the area, and although we felt that their outlook was too narrow and circumscribed to establish general confidence in the communities among whom they labored, their devotion was unquestioned and, from the administrators' point of view, they did a great deal of good.

The District Heads in the pagan districts were among the best in the emirate; two in particular were, each in his own way, outstanding. Ja'afaru, District Head of Katab, was an aristocrat and a distant cousin of the Emir. He was dark skinned with the high, prominent forehead characteristic of his race. He moved with dignity but without a trace of swagger. There was indeed a certain humility about him, but behind his serenity of manner lay great strength of purpose. He was greatly respected by the people of the emirate for his unflinching integrity and his deeply religious outlook.

He was, for those days, a modern-minded man. He typed his own correspondence, in Hausa, and kept his own accounts, accomplishments almost unique in a District Head in the mid-thirties. In all his dealings with his pagan peasantry he was just and conscientious. He did his best for them according to his lights, and though his patrician birth made him paternal and aloof, experience had taught him to be realistic. His pagans certainly trusted him implicitly.

The District Head of Kachia, on the other hand, a Hausa with the title of Dan Galadima, was an entirely different type. A dynamic gnome of a man, he came from one of the families that had served the Emirs of Zaria for generations. He was essentially a man of the people. Although already in his sixties, I have seen him throw off his gown and plunge waist deep in rushing water to superintend the repair of a broken bridge because he could not bear to see the job being botched.

Agriculture was his outstanding interest, and he was always full of new ideas for improving the farming techniques of the people of his district. In this he worked hand in hand with the Agricultural Department, which had lately been encouraging the cultivation of ginger as an export crop. These Zaria pagans were not always easy to manage. Being addicted to strong drink, particularly on market days, their behavior was apt to be erratic, and Edward Holmes, an Agricultural Officer on tour there, was very surprised suddenly to see an arrow whizzing past him as he walked toward a village he was visiting. About thirty paces away a very drunken pagan was shambling off into the long grass. He was only expressing disapproval, but it might quite easily have been murder.

It was acts of irresponsibility such as this that confirmed even the most liberal minded of District Heads in their determination not to relax beyond a certain point. To teach the pagan councils to assume complete control of their own affairs was, to them, an act of insanity. It was tantamount to setting up a rival authority to their own, and by implication, an authority that might one day challenge the jurisdiction of the Emir himself.

But petty rivalries and internal jealousies put any such development quite out of court. No man would acknowledge his neighbor to have a better claim than himself to leadership, and it soon became evident that for some time to come there could be no alternative to paternal rule through the medium of enlightened Fulani and Hausa District Heads.

Ibrahim, Emir of Zaria, accepted the new policy with loyalty, though with many misgivings. The concept that a ruler must do all he can to further his people's interests was quite familiar to him, the concept that they should be taught to manage their own affairs was not. That people who ate dogs and whose women wore little but a bunch of leaves should be led to think they could administer themselves was something entirely outside his philosophy. Admittedly, some of his pagan people were less primitive than others and he and his forebears had taken to themselves concubines, and even wives, from among them, but they were of inferior stock to their Muslim overlords and would, to his mind, never be anything else.

Emir Ibrahim was no longer a young man, neither did he have the commanding personality that was a characteristic of the Gwandu and Sokoto Fulani, but he was friendly and conscientious. Strangely enough, the close personal relationships between the rulers and the administration that were now a feature of Sokoto Province were far less marked in Zaria. For instance, the weekly formal meetings between the chief and his council and the D.O. were held in the D.O.'s office. In Sokoto Province such meetings always took place in the D.O.'s house. The same difference in approach held good as regards the meetings with the Resident which normally followed. Personally, I saw no virtue at all in talking to the Emir and his council across an office table piled with files while clerks and messengers flitted to and fro along the verandas outside. So we changed the venue to my house where, in comfortable chairs, we could discuss the affairs of the emirate in a more relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

II

Each dry season the Emir was accustomed to tour his southern districts, for which purpose he had built a house at Kachia. Here, each year, also in the dry season, a camp of exercise was held which was attended by troops from all over Nigeria, perhaps two thousand in all.

In those days there was no Nigerian Army Service Corps and only a Territorial Engineer Unit, manned by the mining community of the Jos Plateau, which trained separately. The infantry and gunners, therefore, lived off the country and depended on their own resources for their encampments, water supplies, sanitary arrangements, and bridging and track-making. Here Dan Galadima, as District Head, was invaluable. He organized the material for the camps, he supervised the troop's market, and he insured that firing areas were kept clear of woodcutters and cattle herds.

This year, the Emir decided to pay an official visit to the camp at the time I was there. But when I went to visit him on his arrival I found a sick man. He had succumbed to a sharp attack of malaria while spending the night in Kaduna on his way south,

but instead of staying in bed for a couple of days, his sense of duty impelled him to keep his engagement with the troops. Against advice, he had insisted on pushing on. Next morning he was much worse. In those days it was not easy for a European to penetrate to the inner recesses of an emir's house or lodgings, but I was by now accepted as a friend, and an attendant ushered me through the complicated maze of courtyards and intercommunicating rooms to where he lay. His temperature, I found, was high and his chest affected. I advised him urgently to call in Weir, the camp Medical Officer. The diagnosis was pneumonia and, so I was told, good nursing the first essential.

Armed with a list of suggestions for invalid food, I drove off to the nearest railway station, fifteen miles away and sent a priority telegram to medical headquarters at Kaduna. Late that night all we wanted came down by train in charge of the guard. But the arrival of the special food and drugs was only the beginning of the battle. Weir was a young doctor in his first tour, but the old man took to him at once and obviously trusted him. However, we were fighting more than pneumonia, we were fighting prejudice and ignorance, for in the background hovered the wizened crones who prepared the Emir's food and the toothless old men who attended to his personal needs. Not for them European medicine, better the medieval brews and the hell potions of tradition.

For two days he seemed to hold his own. Then, on the third day, his mind began to wander. In his delirium all his thoughts lay solely with this detail and that detail of his daily work. Never a word about himself. On the fourth day I had driven to the station to send off a telegram about him. But as I walked out of the station master's office, the Emir's car drew up outside. Two of his principal attendants got out. From the expression on their faces it was only clear what they were going to tell me. I could tear up my telegram.

It would now lie with the Traditional Selectors to meet and propose a successor. This body, composed of men of high standing unrelated to the ruling house, must select either a son or, failing a son, a grandson of a former emir. The man of their choice should have adequate administrative experience, be of known integrity, and, most important of all, be acceptable to the people.

There were three main families from which the new emir could be chosen, and each had several branches. On grounds of birth, therefore, there was no lack of candidates. For some days there was much maneuvering in favor of two wealthier, though less popular, candidates, but to the great relief of the common people the Selectors' choice fell, if reluctantly, on Malam Ja'afaru, the only one who fully conformed with the four requirements of the administration.

Chapter 8

SOKOTO UNDER THE NEW ORDER

1936-1938

I

In 1935 Sir Donald Cameron retired. He was succeeded as Governor by Sir Bernard Bourdillon. During the Cameron regime there had been many changes in the North. His insistence on a new approach to pagan administration, particularly in the emirates, had led to self-questioning in other fields where overmuch complacency had reigned. This, to my mind, was his great contribution. There were other reforms, judicial and administrative, many of them welcome, but they had less significance in practice than on paper. Having said that, it was not easy for us to forget that Sir Donald Cameron, whose service had been entirely at the desk and never in the field, had with scant ceremony lowered the status of our own particular "master," C. W. Alexander, for a while my Resident in Kano and a man of great integrity whom we all liked and admired. After Alexander's retirement the post of Lieutenant Governor had, at Cameron's behest, been abolished in favor of that of Chief Commissioner. Lieutenant Governors held their commissions from the Sovereign. A Chief Commissioner was an appointment of the Secretary of State.

We understood, at the time, that the Governor had felt that the two Lieutenant Governors, and the Northern Lieutenant Governor and his officers in the provinces in particular, were too independent. The authority of the central government at Lagos should therefore be strengthened. But, changes notwithstanding, in the final resort it was the Resident in his province and the D.O. in the "bush" who had to make the wheels of government turn round. And the eventual effect was, inevitably, increased cen-

tralization and an increasing resentment in the provinces at the arbitrary nature of the remote control exercised from the capital. More roads, more schools, and more hospitals were our compelling need. But for these we required more money, and more money was just what we were not to be vouchsafed.

Had there been regular touring, instead of very occasional tip-and-run visits, by senior officials resident in Lagos to the remoter and less favored parts of Nigeria, the attitude in the provinces toward the central administration would probably have been less critical. But it was not to be until the present Lord Milverton became Governor that steps were taken to bring this about.

Sir Bernard Bourdillon lost little time in visiting us. He had served for many years in India and Iraq and was, in consequence, well used to Muslims. He mixed easily and did all the things that we did in our hours of relaxation. He fished, he shot, and he played polo. And polo was anybody's game who cared to play, for ponies were cheap and so was corn. Emirs' sons and NA officials, from the highest to the humblest, mixed with subalterns and sergeants, bank clerks and junior civil servants. His effect on morale was instantaneous, and it was on morale that the new Governor appeared at first to concentrate. His policies took longer to develop, and for these we had to wait.

His son Bernard served under me in Zaria during his first tour as an A.D.O., a circumstance that was to lead to an invitation to spend some of my local leave at Government House and to an unexpected assignment. Sir Bernard was very anxious to encourage flying in Nigeria. He wished to make the airplane as common a feature of everyday travel in the territory as it already was over wide areas of East Africa. Would I, in the light of my wartime flying experience, be prepared to spend the greater part of my next leave studying how to bring his plans into effect? Should I undertake the mission, I should be working directly under Lord Trenchard, who was also keenly interested in the project. Lord Trenchard had a long connection with Nigeria. Before he embarked upon his flying career, he had been Commandant of the old Southern Nigeria Regiment, and he was now chairman of the United Africa Company. This was a wonderful offer which I at once accepted.

A few months later I sailed for home and at once embarked on the preparation of a scheme and the acquisition of a civil pilot's flying license. When, my work completed, I returned to Nigeria on the expiration of my leave it was, for the first time, by air. The Imperial Airways flying boat service down the Nile to South Africa had very recently been extended by a weekly link by De Havilland twelve-seater to Nigeria and the Gold Coast.

It now lay with the Nigerian government to approve or reject my proposals. My plan was to begin with a flying club at Kano using Tiger Moths. This would be followed by a second club at Lagos. These clubs would also operate cabin aircraft on hire to outlying provinces where there were landing grounds used by the Royal Air Force. Our next purchase would be a small amphibian for use on the Niger and the Benue in areas where landing grounds were impracticable. The whole organization would be linked with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, which would arrange training on service types for those club members on leave who wished to join the Reserve.

The scheme was approved and I began to discuss ways and means with the Secretariat. The senior official under whom I worked was J. S. Macpherson, late of the Malayan Civil Service, who, after a spell in the Colonial Office, had been seconded to Nigeria. An unorthodox project such as mine did not commend itself to purists, but Jock Macpherson's vision and restless energy overcame all obstacles. Our work was soon completed and I set out for Kaduna. Here I was informed that I was posted to Kano as Magistrate and Local Authority in charge of the township. In my spare time I could pursue the idea of forming a flying club. In Kano, government offices opened at 7:30 A.M. and closed, in theory, at 2:30 P.M., but most afternoons I, as Magistrate, had to return to work after a quick lunch, to hear court cases often until nearly dusk. The rest of the time was flying club time.

Nevertheless, three months later, at a crowded meeting, Kano Flying Club was formally constituted under the chairmanship of J. R. Patterson, the Resident. Club officers were elected and draft rules were approved. We had, already, more than fifty applications for membership from the Kano area alone. Then, that same evening, a telegram arrived from Lagos to say that in view of the

recent fall in world oil seed prices, the Financial Secretary had been compelled to advise the Governor that the country could not afford the cost of a flying club. Our eagerly awaited infant had been strangled on the day of its birth.

The initial capital cost involved had been around eight thousand pounds, the net recurrent expenditure appreciably less than this sum. It seemed to us, in our disillusionment, that as war seemed plainly imminent in Europe, air communications and the training of pilots needed encouragement, not the reverse. A year and a half later, when war broke out, the folly of the decision was made even more obvious. However, there was nothing that could be done about it, and as there was no longer any reason why I should remain in Kano as Local Authority, I was transferred to Sokoto to take over the division.

II

My Resident was to be John Carrow, who had been Acting Resident at Kano when I was in the Provincial Office after the Clements affair. He was a man of prodigious drive who had retired from the Royal Navy at the end of the war. He expected, and exacted, the highest standards of efficiency, and he administered with a precision that, whether one agreed with him or not, one could not but admire. But he did not readily brook opposition, whether it sprang from conviction or from sheer inadvertence, and to his junior officers he could be something of a Tartar.

I well remember one occasion when Sir Samuel Wilson, then Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, was visiting Kano. On the day before his arrival Carrow fell sick with malaria and it fell to me to deputize for him as host. The Residency was a massive mud building whose outer wall was several feet thick at the base. Beyond a long, narrow lounge lay an imposing dining room with a lofty vaulted roof. Just below the roof there was a small aperture which threw additional light onto the head of the staircase leading to the Resident's bedroom. This aperture also enabled the master of the house to see what was going on in the dining room below. That evening I, a very junior officer, was sitting at the head of the table doing my best to en-

tain the distinguished company around me. Misguidedly I raised my eyes. There above me, to my dismay, I saw the unruly black mane and the disapproving features of my Resident, whom I had supposed to be safely in bed. He seemed to be glowering down at me, convinced that I was making a thorough muddle of the evening's entertainment. What little self-confidence the charm and consideration of my guests had imbued in me rapidly oozed away until, apparently satisfied, the apparition withdrew.

Eight years had now passed since those days, but the memory lingered. However, on informal occasions, John Carrow was a convivial companion and a generous host. In the field of straight administration I learned more from him than from any other person under whom I served. Many years later I was to inherit, in turn, his two provinces, Sokoto and Kano. The standards that he had established had lived on after him. In no other province did I find anything quite comparable.

Under the just and benign rule of Sultan Hassan, backed by Carrow's relentless drive, the dark days of Sultan Muhammedu were part of the unregretted past, and Sokoto Native Administration was rapidly becoming a model of efficiency to its neighbors. Poverty alone held it back. World prices for Nigeria's exports had sunk lower even than the previous low level, and there was little money in circulation. Material advance was therefore desperately slow. Standards of living, which had once shown signs of rising, again dropped. The people fed themselves and clothed themselves. There was little more that they could do.

But poverty was only one of the enemies with which we now had to contend. Each dry season the advent of the dust-laden Harmattan wind brought outbreaks of disease. Our annual vaccination campaigns against smallpox were hampered by public apathy, and every year a fresh series of epidemics would break out. Now a new killer, cerebrospinal meningitis, had begun to make its presence felt. Once this disease established itself it spread like wildfire in the crowded alleyways and packed markets which were a feature of the larger towns.

The doctors insisted that only by isolation could the disease be checked. But where there were no open spaces there could be no isolation. And so a plan was evolved which would be put into

effect in a few towns, for we had neither the staff nor the funds to tackle more than two or three at a time. In each selected town a series of broad avenues would be driven through the heart of the most congested areas, and spacious, shaded markets would replace the crowded lanes in which buying and selling largely took place. Dispossessed families would be resettled in suitably designed suburbs outside the town walls.

If we could achieve this we would be combating more than disease. Every year there were few towns that did not suffer grievously from the effects of fire. It only needed an untended cooking pot or a carelessly flung cigarette end to start a conflagration that, once it took hold, would rage uncontrolled until some open space brought it to a halt. Hundreds of grass-roofed huts and corn bins would in the space of minutes be reduced to smoking ruin. The houses could be reroofed, but nothing would replace the loss of the year's harvest. Wide streets and tall trees alone could halt the blazing, wind-borne debris that set every roof alight on which it might chance to fall.

The advantages of the policy were obvious, and the Sultan and his council and most District Heads supported it firmly. But with the townspeople it was a different matter. They clung to the familiar squalor of the rabbit warrens in which they and their forebears had lived for generations. Here they felt secure. They did not wish to move despite compensation and despite the provision of sites for new houses in more open surroundings. But move they must, and move they eventually did, though there was much discontent and the danger of public disorder was never far from the surface.

From the very beginning it was uphill work. We even found it difficult to keep the newly planted trees alive. The townsfolk took little interest in them, the town goats far too much. Unless we at once surrounded each tree with a four-foot wall of mud or sturdy wickerwork, the goats would devour, with appreciation, every green bud or leaf that appeared.

The first outstandingly successful experiment in town clearance had been carried out by Max Backhouse, one of my successors at Argungu, a man whose intensity of purpose even the people of Kebbi, past masters of the arts of evasion and obstruc-

tion, proved unable to gainsay. For many years now, old men have nodded and young children have played in the shade of the long avenues of graceful neem trees which he planted along the highways that he drove through the town. Today his name is remembered with affection, but at the time few men could have been more disliked.

The scene of my first major operation was Talata Mafara, a town about halfway between Sokoto and Gusau. The ruling Zamfara family, relics of the day when Zamfara was one of the Hausa states, had recently been dispossessed for misrule and disaffection. In their place the Sultan had appointed as District Head his nephew Sardauna Abubakar, whom I had last met when he brought the Sokoto contingent of Mounted Yan Doka to compete with us in Birnin Kebbi. He was the same quiet, courteous man, with the same delightful smile. But by now he had matured. He had recently paid a visit to England with his uncle, and this experience, and the weight of increased responsibility, gave him an air of assurance that had not been there before.

But we were not to work together in Talata Mafara for long. After a short illness, to the great sorrow of all who knew him, Sultan Hassan died and the Traditional Selectors chose the Sardauna Abubakar as his successor. Soon, however, he and I were intrigued to find ourselves faced with a problem similar to the one which we had just left behind. Talata Mafara was not the only place where overcrowding had to be tackled. The residence of the Sultans of Sokoto itself urgently needed attention. Much of it was entirely lacking in dignity, in particular the honeycomb of dingy huts and hovels which lay between the main gateway and the council chamber, which itself needed replacing. But an influential section of the population was fanatically reactionary in its attitude and thought that nothing should be changed. Should the new Sultan symbolize his assumption of office by demolishing the dwelling places which had housed his forebears' retainers for generations there would be an outcry. There were others who had hoped to succeed the dead Sultan, and they would gladly avail themselves of any opportunity to embarrass the man who had been preferred to them.

John Carrow, therefore, decided that the work must be put in

hand at once. Any murmurs of popular disapproval would thus be directed against him and not against the new Sultan. So, while the affairs of the old Sultan were still being wound up by the Chief Alkali, he arranged that the entire area between the main gateway and the council chamber and the chamber itself should be leveled to the ground. This task completed, Sultan Abubakar moved in, and he and I together designed a forecourt with a circular drive in the center of which was a small formal garden.

Once the work was completed the advantages became obvious to all but the most stubborn supporters of the old ways. But for some while afterward I noticed that whenever I drove into the courtyard to visit the Sultan, a few of the oldest of the gnarled graybeards who had grown up in the dusty, bat-haunted rabbit warren, now demolished, looked disapprovingly down their noses and failed to respond to greetings as I passed. But they got used to it in time.

Once the work was well in hand the Sultan and I went off together to play our part in the annual *haraji* or general tax revision, working in adjoining districts and meeting in the evenings to compare notes. The system of taxation in the Muslim North was based on Koranic law and had been in force for many generations. Since the arrival of the British it had been modified to suit modern conditions, but in essence it followed the old familiar pattern.

This is how it worked. Gradually, since our occupation of the country, an investigation had taken place into the economic life of every village area of every district in the country. As a result of this investigation the annual income of each village area from farming, from livestock, from crafts and industries, and from forest produce had been carefully calculated. The annual tax payable by the community as a whole would be up to one-tenth of this sum. The actual apportionment of the tax to the individual citizen was the responsibility of the Village Head and his elders. The sum could vary between three shillings, or even less, for the poor, and thirty shillings, or perhaps more, for the comparatively wealthy.

Each year the amount payable by each district, with its twenty or thirty village areas, was revised. If the harvest had been good,

and if produce prices were favorable, it would be increased. If prices had dropped, or if drought, floods, or locusts had damaged the harvest, it would be reduced. Once an increase or a decrease had been decided by the Sultan and his council, it lay with the revising authority—the Sultan himself, or his Waziri, or the D.O. working through the Sultan's representative—to apportion the amount now due as between the various village areas. From that point the Village Head and his elders carried on. As a system it was far in advance of anything else in Nigeria at the time; and it worked.

About this time a new star began to gleam distantly above the Sokoto horizon, though with no sign, as yet, of what was to come. When Sardauna Abubakar became Sultan he bestowed the title on his distant cousin Ahmadu, District Head of Rabah District and grandson of the eighth Sultan. Sardauna Ahmadu, who was to become, later, my friend and colleague for many years, was at this time a young man of twenty-nine who had already made his mark as an administrator. Tall and powerfully built, his manner was reserved. But once his confidence was gained there lay behind that reserve a compelling charm of manner. He had been educated at Katsina College, still the only full secondary school in the North, and before his appointment to his family district of Rabah, twenty miles from Sokoto, he had been, like so many of Northern Nigeria's future leaders, a schoolmaster.

But to me, at that time, he was little more than a name, for I was about to leave Sokoto on transfer to Niger Province, a prospect that did not at all please me, though I was soon to change my mind.

Chapter 9

THE NIGER VALLEY

1938-1939

I

My destination in Niger Province was Bida, the old capital of the Kingdom of Nupe, now the headquarters of a large division and more than four hundred miles south of Sokoto. Bida Division lay on the Niger. It was flat and low-lying, and the great river, with its miles of stagnant marshes and sluggish tributaries, exercised what was, to me, a baneful influence on its climate. In Sokoto Province the Harmattan wind had already begun to blow. The air was dry and cool, excepting only when the sun was high. But here, in Niger, from the moment I had left the train, I had found myself in the heavy moisture-laden atmosphere of the river provinces. During the rainy season it had been cool and fresh, but now and for the next few months I should wake up in the morning with my head on a sweat-soaked pillow.

But there were changes for the better as well. The land was greener and more fertile and everyone looked healthier. In Sokoto the people's skins tended to be dry and lusterless; here they had a noticeable sheen, and the children were plumper and more active. We were on the borders of the oil palm country and they were better nourished.

The administrative headquarters of the province were a hundred miles away at the railway junction of Minna. Although Bida was a far larger town and the commercial center of the province and the educational center as well, Minna was more centrally situated and more accessible.

All my previous service in the North having been in Hausaland, the marked difference in temperament between the Nupe and the familiar Hausa and Fulani came as a surprise. The Nupe were said to be far more akin in their ways and their outlook

to the Yoruba. Maybe they had formed part of the same migratory wave that had brought the Yoruba from the Nile Valley over the entire breadth of Africa to the Atlantic seaboard.

A century earlier they had been conquered by the Fulani, but by now the ruling Fulani families had become completely assimilated through intermarriage. Nupe had long become their first language. They spoke Hausa also, but with a marked intonation. As with the Fulani-Yoruba ruling families in nearby Ilorin Province, many of the predominating facial characteristics of the conquering race still persisted, and politically and emotionally the Nupe still looked to the North, despite their strong economic ties with the South.

I soon found life among them to be of unexpected interest. They were more alert, more supple-minded and less conservative than the Hausa. They were also highly skilled craftsmen; their weaving and their brass work were unrivaled outside Kano, and they had evolved a form of glass manufacture. Their womenkind, too, played a far more prominent part in the social and economic life of the community than was the case among the races further north.

The Etsu, or rulers, of Nupeland were drawn from three distantly connected houses whose founders, in turn, had succeeded to the "throne." This fact alone led to constant intrigue. Furthermore, the people of Bida had a record of turbulence. It was not many years since two alleged witches had been stoned to death, in broad daylight, within the town walls.

The Etsu, at this time Muhammedu Ndayako, was a man of striking appearance. Of medium height and bearded, with the upper lip shaven, as is the custom with both Fulani and Hausa, he moved with a slow and regal gait. At first his carriage and his mannerisms seemed flamboyant to one accustomed to the calm dignity of the true Fulani. But he had an air and a way with him that endeared him to his people, and nearly twenty years later, when I left Nigeria, he was as popular as ever.

In 1938 he had not been long in office and had inherited a far from perfect administration. Many of the old familiar abuses once common in Argungu and parts of Sokoto, though absent in Gwandu and Zaria, were well established. Typical among them

was a system of "forced loans." These "loans" were extracted at the end of each month, with the connivance of native treasury officials, from a high proportion of the employees of the native administration. The money, perhaps 5 or 10 per cent of their salary, was used to purchase goods in bulk from a wealthy merchant, himself privy to the "racket." The "loans" would later be repaid to those who had been mulcted in the form of cloth or some other merchandise, probably unwanted, at a price considerably higher than the true value. The profits, which were considerable, were shared among the clique around the Etsu which had organized the transaction.

It was difficult to know how much the Etsu himself knew, or suspected, about all this. Quite a lot, no doubt, but not all. The majority of chiefs were then so surrounded by toadies, crooks, and schemers that only the more shrewd and determined could learn exactly what was going on around them. Many of these men had been favored retainers of former chiefs, and custom demanded that they must be housed, fed, and clothed by whoever might succeed, whatever his own personal feelings toward them. At any rate, to his credit, once the Etsu was brought face to face with hard facts he did his best to clamp down on the wide variety of abuses for which those around him were responsible.

Certainly the greatest authority on the Nupe and their ways at that time in Nigeria was the Rev. Ira Sherk, an American Protestant missionary who lived at Mokwa, eighty miles west of Bida. Being naturally anxious to meet him, I took the first opportunity that arose of visiting Mokwa and calling on him. He had devoted the greater part of his life to the Nupe and was one of the very few white people who spoke their difficult language with accuracy and fluency.

He lived in a little white house with a thatch-covered tin roof next to which stood a tiny church and an even tinier school. Although these isolated mission stations in predominantly Muslim areas attracted few adherents, individual missionaries and their wives and helpers did a great deal of good by sheer example. Orphans and other unwanted children could always find a home with them, the sick could obtain treatment at their dispensaries,

and their little schools played their part in combating the almost universal illiteracy of the period.

I found an elderly man, in a crumpled tropical suit, with rugged features and grave, contemplative eyes which now and again lit up with a flicker of humor. There was a massive simplicity to him which impressed me almost more than the obvious depths of his scholarship. He knew the Nupe, and their customs and their character, with a thoroughness that only a sincere affection could inspire. In the short time that I could spend in his company then, and on later occasions, I acquired at least a beginning of an insight into some of the problems that I had to face.

II

At this time the Northern Provinces sent no representatives to Lagos to Legislative Council apart from the two or three senior British officials, who attended on its peoples' behalf, and British mining and commercial members. All legislation affecting the North, money matters excepted, was enacted by the Governor. There were, on the other hand, ten Nigerian representatives from the Southern Provinces, four of them elected.

When to this fact is added the handicap of distance and poor communications and differences in religion and customs, it is not surprising that the isolation of the frontier provinces of the North, from Sokoto to Bornu, was, as regards Lagos and the coast, virtually complete. But it was strange to find, as I now did, that this same feeling of isolation was almost equally strong in a province such as Niger which lay so much further to the south.

Within the Northern Provinces themselves, only in relatively recent years had there been any attempt to instil a corporate sense among Northern leaders. That is to say, among their chiefs, for party politics were unknown. Now, each year, there was a meeting of principal chiefs in Kaduna to discuss matters of common interest. These interests, however, certainly did not extend far beyond their southerly borders, for both then and for many years afterward they were only too glad to have as little to do as possible with neighbors whose outlook they did not understand and whose ways they found distasteful. Participation in the affairs

of Nigeria as a whole was something that they far preferred to leave to their British advisers, acting on their behalf.

But even in the unapproachable North change was on the way. Following on the new attitudes toward pagan administration insisted upon by Sir Donald Cameron, the first steps were taken toward breaching the walls of privilege which encircled every position of authority in every chiefdom. The majority of the great chiefs had been persuaded to accept on their councils at least one "educated member," as they were then termed. These men owed their appointments primarily to their education and natural gifts. Neither birth nor title had any relevance.

One of these appointments had been made by the Etsu. Already among his traditional councilors were men of ability. They were now joined by one who had education as well as ability. This was Malam Aliyu, headmaster of the principal school in the province. Malam Aliyu was a slightly built man with a shrewd sense of humor and a deceptively diffident manner. He was determined to show how valuable a contribution his education could make toward the conduct of the affairs of the emirate.

He had a further claim to fame. He alone of the townspeople owned a motorcycle on which he "putt-putted" to and from school and from the council, his white gown billowing around him to the terror of the sheep and goats and the admiration of all small boys. In an age when dignity and decorum were all important, a malam on a motorcycle was a most unusual phenomenon. He was destined for great things, and so, too, were many of his former classmates from Katsina College who had themselves, about this time, become council members in their own chiefdoms. In encouraging them, and in persuading the chiefs to recognize their value, we were sowing the seeds of a political revolution that would begin to bear fruit a few years later. But these matters lay in the more distant future. Immediately ahead of us loomed the prospect of war. And, of necessity, it was on the possibilities of war and not on politics that my mind turned when, in May, 1939, I left Bida behind me on my way home on leave.

Chapter 10

THE WAR YEARS

1939-1944

I

Shortly after my return to England Lord Trenchard invited me to lunch. He wished to hear from me the story of the Kano Flying Club. He had been deeply disappointed at the decision of the Nigerian government to abandon the project, and all that it implied, but he still hoped that recent events in Europe might help to induce a change of heart. But it was not to be.

Before I had left Nigeria I had been to see the Commandant of the Nigeria Regiment to ask him if he could tell me what was in store for me should war break out. Would he be asking for my release from government service? We had already been warned, in strict secrecy, that should Italy be involved, as at the time seemed certain, the Nigerian Brigade would be moving at once to East Africa. I now learned that I had been earmarked as Brigade Intelligence Officer. There seemed very little wrong with this prospect, and I at once added appropriately to my stock of textbooks. These I now studied, though a little spasmodically I fear, in the intervals between diversions of a less serious nature.

And so the summer passed, but with its passing I came to a decision that was to change for me the whole course of my life. Five years previously my first marriage had broken up. Ever since my last leave, however, thoughts of remarriage had been in my mind, and I now determined to wait no longer. Shortly after the announcement of my engagement, however, events in Europe began to move swiftly to a climax, and realizing that I should soon be put on short notice to return to Nigeria, my wife-to-be and I decided that we would get married without further delay. Four days after the wedding, Hitler invaded Poland.

From now onward we knew that any day I might be given

only twenty-four hours' warning before I sailed, and even the news of my promotion to Senior District Officer gave us little cheer. But we were to be luckier than most, for we had a whole month together before the telegram arrived that told me where and when to report myself.

And so, on September 29, 1939, we said goodbye in Waterloo Station. That evening I boarded the "Athlone Castle," now a transport, in Southampton Docks. Among my fellow passengers were all the regular and reserve officers of the Nigeria Regiment and other units of the West African Frontier Force, who were then on leave. Long before dawn we were on our way, and when I went up on deck for a breath of fresh air before breakfast we were already out of sight of land. Three other giant liners steamed with us in convoy, their decks packed with troops. On either flank, tossing in the choppy sea, two destroyers kept station as we constantly varied course.

But things did not work out at all in the way that I had expected. On October 10, by this time alone and unescorted, we dropped anchor in Lagos Roads. Within the hour we had transhipped into the tender that awaited us, and as we slipped between the twin moles on which machinegun posts, protected by barbed wire, had now been sited, the great grey ship moved swiftly out to sea, bound first for St. Helena with gunner reinforcements and thereafter for the Cape.

On the customs wharf, as we drew alongside, there stood, a trifle self-consciously, the usual knot of officials that board incoming mail boats. Among them we observed with some misgiving an emissary from the Secretariat, immaculate in white shirt and shorts, a sheaf of papers in his hand. We were soon to know his purpose. As Italy had not entered the war, the departure of the Nigeria Regiment for East Africa had been cancelled, and, in consequence, all but the youngest of the government officials previously released for military service must now revert to civil duties. "Captain Sharwood Smith," I was informed "should report to Headquarters, Niger Province, forthwith." "Accommodation," the young man added, "has been reserved on the northbound train tonight."

Well, I thought to myself, I will at least draw what dividends

I may from this sudden turn in events, and within the hour a cable was on its way to my wife telling her to join me as soon as she could get a passage. Two days later in Minna, my provincial headquarters, I learned from the Resident that I was to take charge of the province when he went on leave in five months' time. In the meantime I should take over Kontagora Division. And it was in Kontagora that my wife joined me a few weeks later.

The Emirate of Kontagora had been the personal creation of Umaru Nagwamatse, warrior son of the fifth Sultan of Sokoto. Nearly a century earlier, finding that success as a military commander and a thirst for power ill fitted him for life at his father's court, he had struck southward with a band of freebooting followers and had carved out a kingdom for himself at the expense of the pagan tribes living in the forest country north of the Niger. Once installed he applied himself remorselessly to subjugating his kingdom by fire and by sword. Wherever we were to travel through the emirate during the forthcoming months, we were constantly to encounter, buried in the bush, the crumbling ruins of the towns and villages that he and his successor had ravaged in their search for slaves. For slaves they had to have to till their farms, to maintain their fortifications, and to send as tribute to distant Sokoto.

It was the roving bands of horsemen, sent out by Umaru's nephew and successor Ibrahim to burn and pillage to within sight and sound of the British posts in the Niger Valley, that caused Kontagora to be first on the list of the Fulani emirates that Sir Frederick Lugard's forces occupied when they advanced across the Niger in January, 1901.

In 1939 Ibrahim's grandson, Umaru Maidubu, was Emir. Here was a man of vastly different outlook and temperament. Since the days of the first Umaru the Fulani aristocracy had mated with their pagan subjects, and much of their mothers' peasant shrewdness and feeling for the soil had been transmitted to their children. Now farming, and not conquest, was the ruling passion. So it was with our present Emir. Already aging, he was of vast girth, but he could still bestride a horse, and he knew intimately every corner of his emirate. Though unfailingly good

tempered, his smiling eyes and lazy chuckle concealed an inner stubbornness, and he could be very determined when crossed by an intractable subordinate or, for that matter, by an overzealous District Officer!

The northern part of the division was the home of a group of pagan tribes whom the Fulani had never succeeded in subduing, the most numerous and most virile of whom were the Dakakerri. These tribes had combined to form a federation with its headquarters at Zuru, a market town seventy-five miles north of Kontagora. Here, in earlier days, the Nigeria Regiment had maintained a small garrison to encourage recruiting, for the "Daks" were natural soldiers and made excellent N.C.O.'s. Indeed, the saying went that every male Dakakerri child was born with a sergeant's sash, for the Dakakerri women carried their newly born babies suspended in a broad strip of coarsely woven crimson cloth, similar in texture and appearance to the sash in question.

Our house in Kontagora Government Station stood on a low tree-covered ridge. On the one side of us was my mud and thatch office. On the other was an empty bungalow that awaited the arrival, one day, of an A.D.O. Below us a stretch of open parkland fell away to where the Kontagora stream, winding through dense undergrowth, marked the Station's limits. Beyond the stream the ground, now more thickly wooded, rose gently toward a distant line of hills on the rocky approaches to which the corrugated-iron roof of a little Roman Catholic mission station shimmered in the sunlight. Kontagora town lay more than two miles away, and so peaceful was the scene around us that even in the daytime antelope would occasionally emerge from the surrounding bush to graze contentedly until disturbed by passing market-goers, or by a lorry rumbling through along the main road.

My wife, too, a stranger to the African bush and a little spell-bound by the friendliness of the people and of her surroundings, found it difficult to believe me when I told her that it was unwise to wander unaccompanied any distance from the house, especially after sunset. But as the dry season advanced, the rasping cough of a wandering leopard and the sound of lion roaring mightily,

night after night, on the ridge between us and the mission gave point to my warning.

It was boredom as well as adventurousness that had prompted my wife's restlessness. The life of a D.O. in a bush station had for so long been, for me, the perfect existence that it had not occurred to me that long hours of inaction during the time when I was tied to the office could be very frustrating to a young wife accustomed to responsibility and a full day's work. Apart from mere inaction my wife's sense of isolation had been further aggravated by the fact that, ourselves apart, scarcely anyone in Kontagora spoke intelligible English. So she determined to learn Hausa, and within three months, by a combination of hard work and a natural flair, she acquired a rough working knowledge of the language and, equally valuable, some understanding of the Hausa way of life. So she began to help me unofficially in the office in much the same way that other wives, in isolated stations, were soon to help their overburdened husbands throughout the war years. Apart from confidential typing and occasional coding and decoding, there was the monthly check on the accounts of the two native treasuries of the division. There were also maps and plans to prepare and statistics to compile, all of which experience was to prove of great value to her, sooner than we thought.

Fortunately, too, she was a good horsewoman, for we spent ten to fourteen days of every month traveling around the division. Most of this time we were on horseback, but not always, for the southern districts of the emirate were infested with tsetse flies and unsafe for horses. Wherever we were the going was usually tough, but whether we were trudging through the dank, dark forests of the Niger Valley or clattering through thorn scrub and woodland further north, we always knew that under a shady tree, near to the halfway point, our breakfast coffee would soon be bubbling in the pot and breakfast itself was already being prepared. This and the sunset hour at ease under the stars before a log fire were the two times of the day that were most precious and best remembered.

With weeks on tour alternating with weeks in the Station,

the months passed swiftly, obsessed as I was, like any other D.O. in charge of a "bush" division, in a never ending struggle to achieve some measure of the progress that everyone desired, despite the intolerably slender resources in money and material that were available to us. As far as the war was concerned, there was little that we could do to help, beyond securing an ever rising flow of recruits from those willing warriors the Dakakerri, and by encouraging the growth of cotton for export, a campaign in which our farmer Emir took a dominant part.

Then came a serious outbreak of cerebrospinal meningitis. Our doctor was stationed at Bida, a hundred miles away, and, occasional visits apart, we were dependent on his written advice and our limited local resources, which were centered on one poorly equipped dispensary presided over by a semieducated attendant. But Malam Isa Likita (Doctor Isa, as he was locally known), a tall, lanky man in his thirties and a typical NA employee of the old school, made up in common sense and solid worth for his lack of education and expertise. His mornings were spent in his dispensary, dressing and dosing his out-patients. Then, for the rest of the day, he rattled abroad on a bicycle of remarkable antiquity, seeking out the sick and ministering to them in the manner that seemed best to him. We once met him late one evening on his way back from some outlying village. As he bore down upon us, hunched over his handlebars, he looked, in his voluminous gown, like some huge, benevolent bird. Many families, fearing quarantine, preferred to conceal their sick, but Isa almost always ran them to ground.

Meanwhile, I preached the virtues of fresh air to successive gatherings of politely disbelieving elders, until the arrival of a bulk supply of "M and B" sulphanomide tablets enabled my wife and myself to take some of the burden off Isa. As on our evening outings we groped through each narrow doorway into the stifling gloom beyond, it seemed impossible that any of the afflicted could survive. But the effect of the sulfa drug was almost magical if administered in time, and as the news spread, concealment became less common and the number of cases began to drop.

II

Before the epidemic had fully run its course, the time came for us to pack up house in readiness for our move to Minna. Whenever we traveled south from Kontagora, it was our custom to be on the road well ahead of dawn before the early traffic had driven the game, plentiful in these parts, into the safety and seclusion of the bush. We had on occasions seen small herds of hartebeest and roan antelope, and once a lone lion had strolled casually across the road, pausing momentarily to scrutinize our approaching car before leaping, with leisurely grace, into the undergrowth. This time, as we swung round a bend while it was still dark, our headlights picked up a leopard crouching by the wayside, its ears flattened, its teeth bared in angry resentment at our irruption on the scene.

Two hours later we bumped across the railroad bridge over the Kaduna River into Zungeru, past the spectral ruins of the old prison, the only visible relic of Lugard's onetime capital, now little more than a decayed trading settlement. One more hour and we were driving down the main street of Minna, with its untidy avenue of *chediya* trees, past sleazy shop fronts and mud houses roofed with disheveled thatch or corrugated iron. Just beyond the town lay the Government Station at the foot, and along the crest of, a steep hill. On the summit, where most of the houses stood, patches of bare rock alternated with clumps of reluctant woodland redeemed here and there by a solitary silk cotton tree, or by a group of widely spreading flamboyants.

The weather was hot that day, even for Minna, and the afternoon temperature on our veranda touched 106 degrees. So it was not until early evening that we felt inclined to move abroad. A mile away from us, across a shallow valley, a high hill towered, gray and gaunt, in the failing light. On its upper slopes stood the tumbled remains of a great stone wall within whose shelter successive generations of Gwari pagans had maintained their independence despite constant harrying by bands of Hausa or Fulani horsemen from the north.

Behind this hill lay a long succession of peaks and ridges,

some densely wooded, others steeping crags of bare rock. It was this range of hills that had determined the transformation of the old Gwari settlement of Minna, many times devastated by the Kontagora Fulani, into an important railway junction. Here was the obvious meeting point of the main line from Lagos and the first rail link between the walled cities of Hausaland and the outer world whose starting point had been the little Niger port of Baro, a hundred miles to the south. Below the range, though well clear of it, we could see the grass runways of the little airfield and beyond, silhouetted against the surrounding farm land, the new two-storied Residency.

Down in the valley itself an "Up Goods," an engine at either end, toiled slowly up the steep incline toward the gap in the hills to our right, beyond which the way lay open to the Kaduna Valley. Soon the rear engine, with a valedictory toot, would bustle back to the station yard to await the next incoming northbound train. Lastly, to our left and beyond the sprawling mass of Minna town, now veiled in a haze of wood smoke, mile after mile of rolling woodland stretched toward the far horizon.

Minna was quite unlike other provincial capitals. Not only was its population almost entirely alien in origins and outlook to the surrounding neighborhood, it was a great deal smaller than its fellows, for Bida, the main center of commerce in the area and by far the largest town in the entire province, had its own claims on government staff and institutions. The European community, government officials, railway staff, missionaries, miners, and merchants, together with their wives, scarcely totaled thirty, while the seven thousand odd Africans, drawn from every major tribal group in Nigeria, lived very much in a little world of their own.

Their only steady point of contact with the people of the land was Minna market place. Here, every morning, came long lines of scantily clad Gwari women, humping on their muscular shoulders conical frames packed high with yams or firewood. Here also came little groups of slim Fulani, their giant earrings and clustered bangles faintly jingling, their calabashes of milk and butter delicately balanced on their heads. A few hours later, their business complete, Gwari and Fulani alike would be setting out for

home. To them Minna was no more than the place where their daily needs could be obtained in exchange for their produce, while to the inhabitants of Minna, the people of the countryside were a source of food and fuel, no more than that. Small wonder that we missed Kontagora, where town and countryside were one.

Two weeks after settling into the new Residency, we were summoned to Jos, capital of Plateau Province, to attend the Northern Residents Conference. This conference, which was held annually, had its counterpart in the Conference of Northern Chiefs which took place in Kaduna. Even in 1940 British and Nigerian representatives of the twelve provinces of the North never met to discuss matters of mutual interest.

To Residents translated from the baking plains of Bornu or the sweltering humidity of the Benue Valley the coolness and comfort of Hill Station, the little government hotel on a high ridge overlooking Jos, were a godsend. Indeed, to all of us, wherever we might be stationed, this opportunity of meeting our fellows in pleasant informality was well worth while. But, viewed in retrospect, as a contribution to Nigerian progress it was a very parochial affair. We argued politely about such matters as the standardization of NA Police uniforms, or the revision of salary scales of NA departmental staff. Nothing of major importance was discussed, no new information of real moment was imparted to us.

This year even the pleasure of meeting old friends was marred by the steady flow of bad news from Europe. For these were the days of Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway and of the dark events that followed. But this was only a beginning, and soon after our return to Minna the full fury of the blitzkrieg was released on the Low Countries. Then followed, in swift succession, the panzer breakthrough in the Ardennes, the evacuation from Dunkirk, and, with the French Armies reeling in retreat, the entry of Italy into the conflict.

As disaster followed disaster in Europe it had become obvious that the war would soon cross the Mediterranean into Africa, and the long prepared plans for moving the Nigerian Brigade to Kenya, now open to attack by the Italian armies in Somalia and Abyssinia, were put into operation.

But among those who were left behind, the feeling of frustration grew more and more acute, and something had to be done to counteract it. Everyone wanted to do something, but what, in our isolation, could we do? Then came news that at home, in towns and villages, units of Home Defense Volunteers were being raised, followed by rumors that the Nigerian government was considering something of the same order. But why wait, when there seemed good reasons for immediate action? Far though we were from the present battlefield, events in Norway and the Low Countries had shown that distance was no defense. The new techniques of airborne warfare opened up possibilities that would once have been deemed fantastic. Apparently, the French in Africa did not intend to fight. Between us, therefore, and the Italian Fezzan lay little but sand and undefended airstrips.

Whether we were in danger of attack or not, some outlet had to be found for the community whose one desire was to get on with the war. Anything was better than inaction, and I decided to "jump the gun" and raise a Local Defense Unit right away. Local support was instantaneous and enthusiastic. Indeed, I was soon to receive an indignant letter from a Permanent Way Inspector, stationed on his own some fifty miles down the line, which ran: "I have heard that a Volunteer Defense Unit is being raised in Minna. I served in the '14-'18 War as a Sergeant in the Lancashire Fusiliers. I would like to know why I have not been asked to join. . . ." Such was the spirit of the times.

Our little "army," when it first mustered on Minna airfield, presented a strange but heartening spectacle, for the response of the local African community was far more widespread than we had expected. After all, this sort of thing had, in the past, been the concern of professional soldiers. Our unit consisted of two platoons, each about thirty strong. One, raised by Norman Butler, the Provincial Engineer, largely from among his own artisans and laborers, was to be trained in obstructions and demolitions; the other, which was composed of Europeans, ex-soldiers and ex-policemen too old for active service, and a sprinkling of young malams and clerks from NA and government offices, was designed to protect vital installations and to take to the bush and adopt guerrilla tactics if attacked in force. More serious resistance would

have to be left to our forty-strong police detachment. Finally, Crawford, the M.O., formed a very efficient-looking little medical unit from his own hospital staff and outside volunteers.

At first, of course, the unit had no arms though it had a call on a miscellaneous collection of shotguns and sporting rifles contributed by their owners. We did, however, have the loan of police rifles and the run of the police range where we assiduously practiced. In addition, Norman Butler evolved a homemade grenade whose principal components were a short piece of lead piping and a stick of gelignite. Most of us held privately that while extreme urgency might justify the use of this weapon against the enemy, no one in his right mind would experiment with it in cold blood.

Looking back, it does not seem as though those things can have really happened. But we were very much in earnest at the time. No one knew where the next blow would fall, no possibility seemed too fantastic, and, after all, pikes and pitchforks were not considered too primitive by the earliest Defense Volunteers at home, though to them, of course, the danger was actual and imminent.

Ultimately we received frigid official approval for our actions, together with instructions to block the airfield runways with petrol drums, a precaution which we had long ago taken on our own initiative. Later we were to learn that, as had been the case in Britain, elsewhere in Nigeria groups of volunteers had come together spontaneously without waiting for government action.

Shortly after the Nigerians had left for East Africa, I had heard that Hugh Richards, "Ricardo," with whom I had never lost touch since our trek together along the Sokoto-French frontier twelve years earlier, was now in Lagos as Commandant of the Regiment. I therefore wrote asking if he would try to secure my release from civil duties in order that I might return to the army. Now, after a lapse of weeks, this letter bore fruit. A septic wisdom tooth having taken me on a four-hundred-mile journey to Lagos to our nearest dentist, I found awaiting me there a new and completely unexpected assignment.

The collapse of France had left Nigeria with a complete vacuum on her northern and northwestern borders. No such develop-

ment had ever been contemplated. Not only had we no knowledge of what was going on in the neighboring French territories now in the hands of anti-British Vichyite administrators, we had no means of finding out. An ex-gunner captain of World War I named Francis Rodd, later to succeed his father as Lord Rennell, who combined an intimate knowledge of the western Sahara, which he had explored between the wars, and experience in military intelligence, had been sent to Lagos by the War Office to do something about this as rapidly as possible. While I was recovering from the ministrations of my dentist a plan took shape and I was summoned to Government House to be informed that I was back in the army again.

III

The plan was that a politico-military organization should be set up, based in Kano, which would take care of the northern and northwestern borders of Nigeria from Chad to athwart the Niger and of the territories that lay beyond. The Dahomey border, from south of the Niger to the sea, and the Spanish island of Fernando Po would be the responsibility of Area Headquarters at Lagos. I was to set up the Kano organization under Rodd's directions and to take over once it was a going concern. I would be given two other French-speaking Northern D.O.'s to assist me, and my wife "could run the office and do maps and cyphering." Had I any suggestions? Indeed I had. Could the Emir of Kano be asked if he would let us have the Gidan Shettima, a twin-storied house of many chambers which stood, protected by a high mud wall, in the very center of the city? This building had been used as a town rest house by the Resident when last I had served in Kano and would be admirably suited for our purpose. Could, also, the Chief Commissioner be asked if he would secure for me the services of three old friends who had worked with me in earlier days, chief among them, Hassan, who was still in Argungu as Head Messenger. All were skilled gleaners of news, and as ex-warrant officers of long and unblemished service, they would be completely trustworthy. Both requests were granted, and some days later we arrived in Kano with three crates of stationery and office

equipment, a French travel book about the Colonie du Niger, a Michelin Guide of the Sahara, and Rodd's own classic, *The Veiled People of the Sahara*.

The Gidan Shettima, originally the residence of the Bornu envoy at the Kano court at the time when Kano was a Bornu tributary, was to prove as adaptable to our purpose as I had hoped. Masked from inquisitive eyes by a fifteen-foot wall, its one and only gateway opened directly into a vaulted chamber where guards could be permanently on duty. Beyond, in the center of a shady courtyard, stood the main building, which we converted for ourselves to living quarters and offices. Adjoining the entrance was a long rectangular room which Rodd made his own during the time he was in Kano. Finally, at the rear, there were kitchens, servants quarters, and stables.

That same evening my three old friends reported for duty, delighted to be of our company again. To complete the team, Rodd brought in Arab, a gentle-mannered Touareg from Bornu who had abandoned the veil. Arab had accompanied Rodd on his Saharan expeditions and was now a Government Messenger. Next day saw the arrival of Frank Humphreys and L. C. Giles, both of whom had served with me in Zaria. The Research Office, Kano, as we were to be known, was now in being.

With her trained troops on the other side of the continent, Nigeria's defenses were dangerously weak, though given time the situation would greatly improve, for a new military command was being set up in West Africa with its headquarters in Accra. Nigeria itself now came under the command of a major general. Fresh units were to be raised, and from the existing ones, now in training, two new brigade groups were being formed with their headquarters at Zaria and Kaduna. Ricardo, having handed over in Lagos to a major general, would command at Zaria. Two of his battalions were encamped in and around Kano.

But Nigeria's military machine was, at present, formidable only on paper. Of the two Kano battalions one company alone was fully trained; there were scarcely any Bren guns and there was only one antitank rifle. For motor transport the troops were dependent on requisitioned lorries, the battered survivors of last

year's groundnut season, and Heaven help anyone who went to war on such as these.

Opposed to us, as we were soon to learn, was the equivalent of a weak brigade of Senegalese Tirailleurs. Half of this force, supported by a field battery and a squadron of armored cars, was concentrated around Zinder, the capital of East Niger, eighty miles across the border from Kano. The remainder were dispersed throughout the territory in isolated desert outposts and in border garrisons. Not a large force, but it was well trained and equipped and it could be easily reinforced, for away to the northward across the desert was the greater part of France's African army.

But we were required to acquaint ourselves with far more than the current order of battle on the other side of the frontier. Little or nothing was on record in Nigeria about communications, trade, political attitudes, and personalities in the Colonie du Niger and adjacent territories. Our prime task, therefore, was to fill as rapidly as possible the blank spaces that existed in the maps and minds of both the civil and the military authorities as regards all matters connected with the transfrontier areas that were relevant to the defense of Nigeria.

The task immediately ahead of us when we began operations was indeed formidable, for our responsibilities covered close to one thousand miles of frontier to a depth of two hundred to five hundred miles. But, apart from our knowledge of Hausa and of the Northern Provinces in general, we had one great asset. The entire machinery, so familiar to us, of the native administrations in the border provinces had been placed unreservedly at our disposal. The Emirs and their principal officials, very anxious to help in any matter connected with the prosecution of the war, gave us enthusiastic support, and any border news of note was rapidly transmitted to us. For news from further afield we had other arrangements.

Very soon after we had begun operations we entered upon what was later to become a very close association with the Free French movement. Before we had left Minna we had heard, by chance, General de Gaulle's appeal to all French men and women who wished to carry on the struggle to rally to him. This appeal had met at once with a wide response in French territories south

of the Sahara, but as he records in his memoirs, the news of the attacks on the French fleet by the Royal Navy had an immediate and adverse effect on recruitment. In the Colonie du Niger he had, until the Oran incident, a strong following. But after Oran, Vichyite authority began rapidly to transfer French officers and administrators thought to be anxious to carry on the war to posts remote from the frontier.

But before and after this process had begun, brave and determined men made their way in ones and twos across the closely guarded frontier and arrived in Kano unshaven and disheveled after days and nights of hiding in the bush. Ours was the obvious organization to take care of them in the first place. My wife spoke French well and she had skilfully created, out of the bizarre surroundings in which we found ourselves, a home in which we could entertain comfortably.

For ten days or more each month we toured the frontier areas, sector by sector, from the arid wastes west of Lake Chad to the dense forest country athwart the Niger at Illo, where "for lack of funds" my painfully constructed causeway had long since been surrendered to the waters. The detailed story of our activities over the next twelve months, however, has little relevance as far as this book is concerned, except insofar as they took us to parts of Nigeria which we had never previously visited. Chief among these was Bornu on whose eastern border lay the Territoire du Tchad, which had been the first colony in French Equatorial Africa to join De Gaulle. We had a particular interest in the security of Tchad, for it was here that Free French forces were concentrating, and the capital, Fort Lamy, was one of the staging posts on the RAF reinforcement route across Africa to the Western Desert and beyond.

There was one period when it looked as though a threat might develop against the colony from the Colonie du Niger to the north of us. The Vichy government was making a considerable issue of the matter, and General de Gaulle himself mentions it in his memoirs. But to us in Kano anything in the nature of a serious attack seemed impracticable, for the only line of advance must follow a third-rate and highly vulnerable road which ran for a hundred miles below the desert and close to the frontier.

However, my General thought it advisable that there should be a reconnaissance along the border westward from Lake Chad in order to discover whether any unusual road work was taking place without which no offensive would be possible. So off we went on a journey that was to be the toughest that we had yet undertaken and one which was to remain lodged in our memories because of two experiences that befell us during its early stages. The first of them occurred on the night before we were due to reach the border, the second on the border itself.

The night in question was spent at Arege, a dilapidated little village built on a fifty-foot-high hummock of sand, the only landmark of its kind between Maiduguri and the border. As a precaution, the last eighty miles of the rough motorable track between Maiduguri, capital of Bornu, and the frontier had not been cleared this year. And so we had spent all that morning, and part of the afternoon, slowly making our way across sixty miles of sunbaked sand and scrub, home of wild ostrich and addra gazelle but no place, we thought, for motorcars.

In theory, all we had to do was to follow the same route that the camel trains and the pack oxen took, and this we did at first, grinding along unhappily in bottom gear. But so thick and yielding was the sand that the slightest rise at once brought us to a shuddering standstill. Our only course, we found, was to keep to level ground, swerving off the track to left or right and lurching blindly across country, battering down bushes and undergrowth until we could find our way back again.

Anything was better than to lose momentum, for it was the hot season and the burning sand spelled torment to the lightly shod feet of our guides and servants, perched precariously behind. Without them to heave we could never win free once we had stalled. Stall we did, many times. Sometimes it was a fox hole, sometimes the underground workings of an abandoned ant hill, that brought us to a halt axle deep in nothingness. At other times it was simply the finely sifted sand or our furiously boiling radiator. But each time we dug ourselves out until the last time, halfway up the Arege hummock, and there the truck could stay until the cool of the morning when we could turn it round and reload it for our onward journey.

As we waited for our loads to be brought up to the rest house, we surveyed the scene around us. For a day and a half we had been skirting, at no great distance, the western shores of Lake Chad. Now, for the first time, from the tiny eminence on which we were to encamp, we were able to see not many miles away the dark green belt of woodland and reeds that guards the approaches to the lake. But of the lake itself we could see nothing. To have come so far and yet to have failed to catch a glimpse of one of the legendary wonders of Africa was a sad disappointment.

But there were many other things to think of. First, we must somehow mitigate the squalor of our surroundings. The rest house, like so many of its kind in the remote northern Bornu bush, was badly thatched and extremely filthy. For months goats and donkeys had taken their ease here and the floor was ankle deep in ordure. Scant though the shade, we had no choice. We had to camp in the open, deriving what comfort we could, until the sun went down, from the protection of a pair of scraggy thorn trees.

Later that day, after dark, we were sitting listening to the B.B.C. news when, all of a sudden, to the eastward, we noticed that across what had been a wide expanse of inky darkness there now lay a lane of shimmering light. The waters of the great lake had, under the glittering impact of the rising moon, now at the full, sprung suddenly to life. As the moon rose, the brilliance of its reflected beams grew in intensity until, when the time came to go to bed, the eastern horizon was bathed in light.

But, with the passing of the hours, the vision was to fade almost as rapidly as it had appeared. The night, like all its fellows, at this season of the year was hot and airless, and sleep came fitfully. In the small hours, by which time the moon had passed its zenith, we could see the lake no longer. The darkness from which it had emerged, as at the touch of a switch, again shrouded the horizon.

Next day, almost at once, we left the heavy sand behind us, and for the next hour, now moving swiftly, we crossed a succession of grit-strewn flats, studded with stunted thorn and open patches of baked mud, split by the heat of the sun into a meaningless gray mosaic. Then, quite unexpectedly, at a turn in the

track this world of dun and ochre was left behind. In the place of mile upon mile of desolation, we saw before us, marking the frontier, the vivid green valley of the River Yobe, a paradise of lush pastures and winding waterways on whose placid surface Egyptian geese, mallard, and teal moved contentedly to and fro.

For three days, by easy stages, we followed the river's course westward, making inquiries as we went until finally we came to Geidam where, to remind us of earlier wars, the ruins of the Mounted Infantry barracks of Lugard's day still stood erect. In Geidam market place all the gossip of the countryside was exchanged, but even here we learned nothing, and as it seemed plain that nothing disquietening was taking place across the border, we set out for home.

One day General de Gaulle himself arrived in Kano on his way through to Cairo. It was my duty to meet him at the airport, and as he approached across the tarmac, impressive of bearing and immensely tall, it was easy to see why he was already a legend. That evening we entertained him and his party at the Gidan Shettima. We found him serious and remote in manner. But he did unbend sufficiently to comment to my wife, with a shadow of a smile, on the way in which she had adapted our unconventional surroundings to their present purpose. He asked us many questions about the Free French officers and N.C.O's who had passed through our hands and thanked us for what we had been able to do for them.

By July, 1941, the time approached when we must go on leave, for we were both very tired. We went to South Africa, where most of our friends had taken their leave, and where my General had arranged a month's attachment to Defense Headquarters at Pretoria for me. He wished me to bring back with me a report on the intelligence problems that the South African Forces had encountered during their successful campaign in East Africa.

On my return to Lagos I found that, against General Hawkins' wishes, the Kano organization had been all but dismantled. I was to remain in Lagos at Area Headquarters. Then followed four miserable months relieved only by an occasional escape to Kano, on inspection, and by tours along the Dahomey border.

At the end of this period I was allowed to hand over and was sent north to be attached to Ricardo's headquarters. From here I was sent on a two-month tour of the border. On my return I was told that the Nigerian government was pressing for my release. If I wished to remain in the army I could have a post on Ricardo's staff. But this seemed to me no way to spend a war, for there was no news yet of any move to Burma, and I applied to return to civil duties.

IV

My posting was to Lokoja, capital of Kabba Province, as Acting Resident. Kabba Province was as far from the frontier as any province in Nigeria. Here, it doubtless occurred to my Chief Commissioner, I should be well out of mischief; but General Hawkins, hearing of the proposal, would have none of it. So once again I found myself taking the road to Sokoto, bound for Birnin Kebbi as D.O., with the additional duty of keeping in touch with affairs across the frontier on behalf of the army.

When I had last been stationed in Birni Kebbi there had been eight British officials in the Station. Now the division had to manage with a skeleton staff of three only. But there was no lack of society, for the army had returned after a lapse of thirty years, and we had as garrison a company of infantry and a troop of Mounted Levies.

The military role of these Levies, which had been raised in all the larger border emirates, was reconnaissance and protection against incursions by Vichy Gardes de Cercle, the mounted gendarmerie with which in peacetime the French had maintained law and order. But the Levies really owed their existence to causes of deeper significance. There had always been a barrier between the ruling classes of the North and the army, and the higher command hoped that by raising mounted units led by men of good family they would break down this barrier.

To the chiefs and to the ruling classes of the North in general the Nigeria Regiment had always been an essentially British creation. It had, after all, been the instrument by means of which they and their own armies had been subdued in the early years

of the century. Apart from this, the soldiers, in the eyes of the ruling caste, were excessively addicted to strong drink and loose living and to practices that were displeasing to orthodox Muslims. The army was for pagans and for the rootless laboring classes of the big cities. It would be unthinkable for any young man of decent family to risk corruption by enlisting.

It was true that by 1939 a high proportion of these superb fighting troops came from the pagan tribes of the Niger and the Benue valleys and the hill country beyond, but there was still a good sprinkling of the solid Hausa peasantry that had once formed the backbone of the regiment. The signalers and technicians, on the other hand, were recruited almost exclusively in the South, where standards of education were higher. There were, as yet, no Nigerian commissioned officers because the Northerners, who formed 90 per cent of the army in the pre-war years, lacked the education needed to take them beyond the rank of warrant officer.

Now the army hoped that the chiefs would induce the more adventurous of their young relations to enlist in the Levies and there learn the profession of arms among people of their own class and on horseback, as befitted the sons of gentlemen. In this manner the Levies could become a *corps d'élite* which would produce an officer caste for the regular forces.

But, as a social experiment, the Levies were to be a failure. Each Levy bore the name of the parent emirate, and the prestige that this conferred was certainly acceptable to the chiefs concerned. Equally acceptable was the prospect of jobs for awkward boys, for among their relatives and the more turbulent of their retainers were many to whom the prospect of "seeing life with the Levies" was far more attractive than more orthodox employment. The result, therefore, was a small body of hard-riding, swashbuckling Irregular Horse; excellent fighting material under iron discipline but a standing menace to the public peace if uncontrolled.

But to return to Gwandu. Of far greater significance than changes in the European population was the change in control at the top. My old friend Emir Usumanu had died in 1938, and his younger brother Yahaya had succeeded him. Emir Yahaya did not

seem to have changed greatly since the days when we had toured his district together, bucketing across farmland and through thorn brake in his little Austin Seven. Tall and slenderly built, he was less deliberate and less mannered in his gait and movements than the generality of his brother chiefs. Yet, for all that, he had a commanding presence. His features, in repose, were those of a spiritually dedicated man; yet, in conversation, when pleased or diverted, a swift smile of great charm would come readily to his lips. While he did not have the explosive personality of the unforgettable Usumanu, he had the same inflexible sense of purpose, to which he added a deep compassion for his fellow man. He had succeeded at a time when values were changing and new ideas had begun to spread, and, having himself been to Katsina College, he was soon to become one of the foremost advocates of progressive thought and action in the North.

Islam and custom had always, between them, imposed on the rulers of Northern Nigeria certain clear obligations. These were the giving of alms to the sick and needy, the support of aged dependents, openhanded munificence at the appropriate season, the protection of the poor against the devices of evildoers, and, significantly, the maintenance of all the apparatus of authority, the retainers, horsed and foot, and the pageantry and circumstance that all such responsibilities involve. But Islam and custom, between them, also sanctioned the imposition of the dues and the acceptance of the offerings without which the obligations of those in authority could not be fulfilled.

For instance, it had always been the custom for all ranks of society to signalize their allegiance to their immediate superiors, to whom they looked for favor or protection, by periodical offerings in kind or cash. Chiefs could also expect communal labor for the clearing of roads, for the repair of their houses and other public buildings, for the tilling of their farms, and for the gathering of the harvest. In return for these services gifts of food and money were normal practice, and more substantial help was afforded in times of sickness or famine.

The system could be, and at times was, grossly abused, but shorn of its more objectionable features, it had at least the merit of operating to the benefit of all; for those who gave did so in

the knowledge that they themselves would benefit when they were in need. It also provided the chiefs and their lieutenants with their only means of maintaining the staff and apparatus without which they could not discharge the responsibilities imposed on them by government and expected of them by their people.

In prewar years, when prices were so low that a man and his horse could be fed for less than a shilling a day and when thatching grass cost only a penny a bundle, those in authority could, with the aid of the gifts and offerings that custom sanctioned, maintain without difficulty the state that their duties and public opinion demanded. But now, with rising costs and well-paid employment easy to obtain, the position had drastically changed.

In the old days we of the administration had never thought to inquire into the personal finances of the chiefs. Provided that there was no marked ostentation and extravagance, such matters seemed to be no affair of ours. The people were content, the chieftdom was being administered with reasonable efficiency, the system was understood and accepted, and it worked. Why, therefore, worry? We never paused to wonder where the money came from that fed, clothed, and mounted the wizened graybeard who, at his master's command, would saddle his horse and canter off into the night toward some distant destination, an urgent message in his leather haversack. We never asked ourselves how a District Head contrived to maintain the group of stalwarts who seemed to spend most of their time basking in the sun at their master's gateway but who would set out with bow and arrow in pursuit of the band of armed robbers that was reported to be terrorizing some remote hamlet. So long as these retainers served the cause of government and were not used to prey upon the peasantry we accepted their existence without question.

But now things had changed, the cost of everything had rocketed. It was now quite impossible for chiefs and their lieutenants to maintain the status to which they had become accustomed, and which was held to be their due, unless they stepped up their demands upon their subordinates, demands that would eventually fall, with interest added, on the peasantry. Only a few chiefs chose this way. The majority reduced their households and the

number of horses in their stables and relied for the maintenance of their diminished estate on the generosity of their subjects, for the Northern peasant expected pageantry from his leaders and was prepared to pay for it, within reason.

A few chiefs, anxious to do their best to adjust themselves to the limitations of the times, went further and conscientiously tried to live on their salaries, demanding nothing to which they were not legally entitled. Their reward, however, was not the gratitude of their peasantry but, instead, a reputation for meanness that cost them their popularity and weakened their authority. In the face of this experience all but one or two of them followed the example of the majority, accepting what was voluntarily offered while keeping their hands clean whenever gifts of dubious origin and motive came their way.

Almost the only chief who succeeded in exchanging the old world and its ways for the new without loss either of prestige or of popularity was Yahaya of Gwandu. So great was his authority and so high his personal reputation that he could afford to scorn the trumpets and the trappings that lesser men found indispensable. Yet, although he lived austere, there was nothing puritanical about him, and he took great pleasure in the simpler joys of life.

It was a wonderful experience to work with him. It was typical of him that in contrast to the old days when the D.O. unearthed the scandals and the Emir administered the correction, Sarkin (Chief of) Gwandu Yahaya required no help from the D.O. in bringing such wrongdoing as there was to light and insuring that there was no recurrence.

v

In one particular sense my "homecoming" to Birnin Kebbi had not been a happy one. From the moment of my arrival the land had been under the shadow of famine. The rains, which had begun as usual at the end of April, had followed their normal course throughout May. Then, with the coming of June, a drought had set in which had persisted throughout the month. Day after day the sun beat down unrelentingly from a sky of brass until

the corn, already breast high, began to shrivel and droop. Each night, for an hour or so, the lightning flickered on the eastern horizon and then died out, and then began again, and again died out, and no rain came. If this continued, hundreds would die and thousands would suffer, for the peasantry, feckless by nature at the best of times, had very little in reserve in their earthen corn bins.

There were two corn harvests in the year. The first, the bull-rush millet, would in a normal season now be ten feet high and ripening fast; the second, the guinea corn, would not be ready until November. But this year the upland millet, planted in light, sandy soil from which the moisture had long since been sucked, had been the first to fade and die. The lowland millet along the edge of the marsh, would survive for a while, but each market day less and less corn appeared for sale in the long thatched stalls where that sordid sisterhood, the grain dealers, normally crouched covetously over their wares. It was plain that they smelled profit in the air and were holding what they possessed against the coming shortage.

The Emir had already sent lorries southward to buy up as much corn as we could afford from our NA reserves, and as the first consignments began to arrive, we decided to put on one side enough for the hospital, the school, and the prison and use the rest to rig the market. I had powers under the defense regulations to control prices and to requisition stocks, but to impose a low price would drive what little corn there was into the "black market." On the other hand, if we put a ton a day on the market at our price we would force the corn-sellers' price down, and if they, and the two wealthy traders in the town, hid their stocks I could threaten to requisition and, if need be, carry out the threat. But by then, we hoped, the rains would have broken and more corn would come in from the villages, once confidence was restored.

Still the drought persisted, and even the lowland corn, growing daily browner, began to droop beyond redemption. Then, when we had almost abandoned hope, the nightly portents changed. This time the distant flickering grew in intensity, and a long black wall of cloud, sharply silhouetted against the coruscating skies beyond, rose above the horizon until, as though at a word of com-

mand, it began to roll swiftly toward us to the accompaniment of an unceasing drumfire of thunder. Meanwhile, the night was still and stifling until, almost at the moment of impact, there came a slight rustling in the trees, a faint breeze blew from the east, and then, with a blinding flash followed almost simultaneously by a shattering clap of thunder, the tempest was upon us. First, a solid wall of dust and wind tearing and battering at everything in its path, then a few hot, heavy drops of rain, then a further flash and the slamming home to earth of the thunder and the stench of brimstone, then—the long awaited deluge.

For four hours the rain fell, at first in a solid sheet, then steadily, and then in a gentle drizzle. Finally, silence, except for the drip, drip, drip of the water from the roof and the loud chorus of countless happy frogs. When day broke, all was sweet and fresh and smiles were on every face. A few days later there was a further downpour, followed by a third. The rains were back with us, and what was left of the lowland crop was saved. But the yield would be very poor and much misery lay ahead until the dry season when the guinea corn would be ripe for harvesting.

In August I had to leave Birnin Kebbi for Sokoto. At home I had suffered from boyhood from acute hay fever in the pollen season. Now, in Northern Nigeria, I had found that regularly every year there were certain pollens, notably that of bullrush millet, that, not content with inflicting hay fever on me, invaded my lungs as well, until I breathed and moved with difficulty. As I grew older the effects became more severe. The only course was to move, each year, from the area until the three weeks' pollen season was over. So this, to me, was just another year.

In Sokoto the millet had ripened at the usual time and the period of allergy had passed. But I was not to return to Birnin Kebbi. The D.O. at Sokoto was soon going on leave, and I took over. Much of my time in Sokoto was to be spent touring the eastern half of the sultanate from south of Gusau to the frontier. Gusau itself, my temporary base, had been transformed by the advent of the railway from the sleepy country town that I had known so well fifteen years earlier into a thriving commercial center. The main street was now lined with shops and storehouses, each one with its heavy produce-weighing scales outside. Little

remained to remind me of the days when, at the approaches to the town, I had listened to the full-throated chorus of the track-laying gangs as they carried forward the heavy lengths of steel rail to dump them one by one, with perfect timing, alongside the waiting sleepers.

The council member chosen by the Sultan to supervise these eastern districts was his distant cousin Ahmadu, his successor as Sardauna, whose energy and forcefulness made him an obvious choice for this, one of the most responsible posts in the administration. Gusau, with its mixed population, together with the surrounding countryside, was still a hotbed of petty intrigue and a favored haunt of crackpots and malcontents and criminals on the run.

The new Sardauna reminded me in certain ways of Emir Usumanu of Gwandu. Though he lacked Usumanu's hawklike features, there was a definite facial resemblance and there was, above all, the same tempestuous personality, the same acute sensitiveness, and the same charm.

One of our main tasks was to supervise the recruitment of a special labor force that was being raised to boost the production of vitally needed tin and columbite. The laborers, who were nominally volunteers, served for a month at a time only, and District Heads had no great difficulty in filling their quotas, for any man who disliked the thought of the cold winds of the Jos Plateau could buy himself a substitute from among his fellow villagers. Each gang took its own cooks and comforts, and while there was no great enthusiasm on entrainment, good pay and strange spectacles, not least among them the obtrusive nudity of the pagan ladies of the plateau, soon reconciled them to their four weeks' stint away from home. We were also responsible for the collection and dispatch of corn for the army and for the minesfield labor force. This was not a pleasant task, for although eastern Sokoto had not suffered from the disastrous drought that had afflicted Gwandu, it had not been a good year, and the peasants were far from anxious to part with any of their surplus corn, even though individual quotas were low.

Finally, we had to pay periodic visits to the northeast frontier districts where a form of underground warfare had been in prog-

ress for some months. The Vichy French administration, ready to seize on any means of venting its anti-British feelings, had been secretly organizing a series of stock-raiding forays into Nigeria under the leadership of professional criminals. These men stuck at nothing should our own villagers interfere with their operations, and casualties had begun to mount. Matters of this nature were the concern of the para-military organization that, in civilian guise, had assumed responsibility for the political and economic functions of the Research Office, Kano, at the time when General Headquarters had decided on its demise. This new organization had encouraged the menfolk in the border villages to band themselves together to defend their stock on the tacit understanding that no awkward questions would be asked should they meet force with force.

Sooner or later a serious clash was bound to occur, and when the day of reckoning came it was our local "Home Guard," armed with bows and arrows, swords and spears, that prevailed. A group of Katsina men, led by a determined old warrior, a veteran of bygone wars, successfully ambushed a band of raiders on their way back over the border with stolen goats and sheep. In the ensuing skirmish a number of the raiders were wounded, and their leader, a well-known criminal, was brought down by an arrow and then decapitated. This should have sufficed, but for good measure and as a warning to others, the victors, before departing for home, stuck the gory emblem of their success, still dribbling blood, on a stake at the point where the owner had led his gang across the frontier.

Any doubts as to the connivance of the Vichy authorities in these matters were soon to be dispelled. Two days later the local Commandant crossed into Nigeria near the scene of the incident with a mounted escort of Gardes de Cercle. He then proceeded to parade defiantly for a mile down the motor road which at this point closely follows the border. Having made his gesture, he retired, taking with him as a trophy a red flag which a Public Works Department repair gang had erected by the roadside to warn oncoming traffic. More practically minded, his followers helped themselves to two goats and a donkey which they found grazing in their path. Within a few hours, Nigerian armored cars were

patrolling the road. No further incursions took place in this area.

It was at Gusau that my wife rejoined me, but not, alas, to drive on to Sokoto to unpack and settle in. Instead, she found herself whisked straight off on a trip to the border where there had been trouble from cattle-raiders. Happily, this was to be the last of such incidents, for in November the North African landings took place and strong Nigerian columns moved up to within striking distance of the border, at a number of points, ready to move in and occupy should there be any general resistance in Vichy-held North Africa to the Anglo-American forces.

What happened next is history. As far as our frontiers were concerned, all the militantly pro-Vichy military commanders and administrators in the areas opposed to us were, within a matter of weeks, replaced by men of a very different caliber, the frontier was thrown open, and a highly regrettable phase in Anglo-French relationships came to an end.

It was about this time that Sir Bernard Bourdillon, when on tour in the North, invited senior Administrative Officers to set out, quite informally and with complete frankness, what their personal views were on the future political development of Nigeria. He especially wished to know what we thought could be done to break down the isolationist attitude of the North and make it one with Nigeria as a whole. Among other points that he made was his conviction that it was high time that Nigerians were admitted to the Administrative Service. What would be the attitude of the chiefs to such a step? The chiefs of Sokoto Province, when asked, replied that they would have no strong objection to Northern Administrative Officers, when it became possible to train them. They would, however, find D.O.'s from other parts of Nigeria completely unacceptable.

My own personal reaction to the general question, I remember, was that there was no point in arguing that North and South were interdependent economically and politically. Still less was it any use telling the Northern chiefs and people that if they wanted to preserve their own traditional way of life they must accept the South and learn to meet it on reasonably equal terms, instead of pretending that it did not exist. Logic had no part in the problem. Nothing short of a biological shock, such as, maybe,

the introduction of a few Southern D.O.'s, would persuade them of their danger.

Sir Bernard Bourdillon's conclusions, formed as the result of these inquiries, pursued throughout Nigeria, would pave the way to the major constitutional changes which would be introduced two years later by his successor Sir Arthur Richards, the present Lord Milverton. And it was to be these changes, or rather the invasion of the North by Southern politicians in reaction to them, that were to produce the biological shock that was so much needed.

VI

Early in 1943 I was transferred to Minna to take over Niger Province, again as Acting Resident. Soon after settling in I received a personal letter from Sir Bernard Bourdillon in which he told me that he had heard that I had been moved from Sokoto because of my "unhappy relations" with the Sultan. He had also heard similar stories in connection with the Emir of Bida. Nevertheless, feeling sure that I would take the advice that he was about to give me, he had recommended to the Secretary of State that I should be promoted to Resident. He then went on to describe his own relationships "with Feisal" during the time that he had been stationed in Baghdad and to advise me as to how I should best bring influence to bear in dealing with important chiefs in matters where it was my duty to advise or intervene.

This letter, the writing of which by a Governor to a relatively junior officer was an act of great kindness, came as a shock to me, for I had heard from the Sultan only a few days previously. In his letter, written in that well-known sprawling handwriting, he had given us all the latest news from Sokoto and had ended by expressing the hope, shared by his council, that I would soon come back to them "this time as Resident." With the Emir of Bida, too, there had been no apparent lack of friendliness.

But, I thought to myself, there must be some basis for these stories, and after some heart searching, I had to admit to myself that in my anxiety to stamp out corruption and oppression I had been more direct and more demanding in my attitude toward the chiefs with whom I had dealings than my superiors, brought up in the old traditions, considered appropriate. But my relations

with those same chiefs were also close and personal, and perhaps because of this we had remained friends. Nevertheless, as far as the future was concerned, I must plainly school myself to be less impetuous.

But there was another aspect of the relationships between the administration and the chiefs in which, although my thoughts were still a little inchoate, I felt that in essence I was right and my masters were wrong. I had always been a fervent believer in the Lugard doctrine and in the part that the chiefs of the North must play in the administration of the country, but I had always instinctively felt, also, that it was wrong that they should be forever sacrosanct in their persons and that the system that they represented should remain inviolate for all time. Surely neither common justice nor sane politics could permit the continuation in office of men in whose name, or at whose instance, the poor and helpless were oppressed. Yet, to take just one example, there was a chief in Niger Province who represented all that seemed to me objectionable in a ruler. As a judge he was venal, as an administrator he was extortionate, his word was valueless, and his fingers were forever sticky with other men's honey. His people disliked and despised him, yet he would not change. It seemed that no other course remained short of deposition. But when I made my case to my Chief Commissioner, he replied, "What, Sharwood Smith! Depose a Second Class Chief? Heav'n forbid!" So other and less effective means had to be sought to contain his cupidity and spare his subjects distress.

Here was a solitary example, but there were, I knew, others in other provinces. Sooner or later, with the spread of education the people would rebel against autocracy and maladministration, and where would we be then? What would our moral standing be, committed as we were to a system that had remained static for far too long and which too often provided cover for oppression and corruption. I was only one among several of my generation who had begun to think along these lines, but throughout the period between the wars, the majority of our seniors had remained apparently unshakable in their conviction that for the North the old-style emirate system was all that could be desired for all peoples and all circumstances.

Chapter II

THE NORTHERN AWAKENING

1944-1947

I

By late 1944 the war news grew more and more encouraging, and we in Nigeria could begin to plan for the years of peace that would follow the victory that now seemed assured.

During the twenties and thirties and later, those of us who had served in the provinces had become so inured to making each pound of hard-won revenue do the work of three that our minds could scarcely grasp the fact that the age of parsimony had ended with the passing by the United Kingdom Parliament of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act. Thanks to its provisions, when the Legislative Council met in March, 1945, an outline Development Plan was laid on the table of the House which provided for the spending, within the next ten years, of no less than £55 million of which £23 million would be contributed by the British taxpayer.

This amount of £55 million, when compared with a total prewar annual revenue of £8 million, was a breathtaking sum, and when the Ten Year Plan took shape a year later it ushered in possibilities hitherto unimagined, and to the ordinary taxpayer it promised the beginnings of a new world. All towns of five thousand inhabitants or more were to have pipe-borne water, and before many years the peasantry of the North would no longer have to rely largely upon unclean wells and pools for their water supply, for there was to be a water point with pure water for every five hundred persons. There were to be sixty more hospitals, and millions would be spent on health and education, on farming, on veterinary services, and on a vast grid of trunk and feeder roads. This trunk grid was of particular interest to us in the North, for within our borders lay three-quarters of the land

mass of Nigeria. Our rapidly growing output of groundnuts and cotton must be transported to the railway or to the river ports, and roads, to us, were indispensable pathways to the wealth without which we should never be able to pay for all the things we needed.

While under the plan each group of provinces would have its own Area Development Committee which would advise a Central Board in Lagos, what affected us most was our own provincial committee. This, at last, would have something to plan for and something to plan with, for apart from government and colonial development and welfare funds, each native treasury had amassed considerable reserves of its own.

But before our Provincial Development Committee got down to making recommendations, it seemed essential to me that its members should first be provided with an accurate picture of the province and its people's needs. Twenty to thirty years earlier, in the postpioneering days, the Resident of each province had been required to compile a gazetteer containing a full description of his province and its peoples. What we now needed was an up-to-date survey. If missionaries and representatives of commercial firms would add their contributions to the material provided by government officials, we should soon know a great deal more about each other's work and problems than was the case at present. Indeed, a joint undertaking of this nature could well prove the first step toward the birth of a provincial *esprit de corps* that would embrace all races and all interests.

And when our committee met for the first time it looked as though our hopes would soon be realized. As I entered the room to take my seat the buzz of conversation rose high as, in animated groups, the members, assembled from all four corners of the province, chatted and jested with one another. At the central table the Emir of Bida, completely at home in any gathering, exchanged pleasantries with his fellows, tactfully including the humbler Gwari chiefs, grouped together in a shy, self-conscious knot, a little overawed by the occasion. Nearby, the young Emir of Abuja, the first of a new generation of English-speaking chiefs, listened attentively while, with throaty chuckles, our old friend Umaru, Emir of Kontagora, commented saltily on current happenings.

At the far end of the room Daldy, the Provincial Engineer, was, with his customary urbanity, parrying an attack by the District Manager of the United Africa Company on the state of the Bida-Jebba motor road, an old bone of contention, while two of the Emir of Bida's councilors hovered in the background awaiting the opportunity to launch an assault on a different front. Nearby, pale and earnest in his long white gown, Father O'Hara, the Roman Catholic adviser on mission schools, was deep in conversation with Christopher Bell, the Provincial Education Officer. It was already plain that this was to be no ordinary gathering. There would be none of the usual anxiety to run through the two-day agenda as rapidly as possible so as to be off on the long road home again. All members were equally enthusiastic, and there was a feeling of excitement and anticipation in the air.

From the start we determined that there must be no concentration of effort on provincial headquarters and on one or two other favored localities. Each area, however remote, must benefit in some way from our provincial plan, a new school here, a new village dispensary there, a new feeder road, a town improvement scheme with shady avenues and fruit tree nurseries, new market stalls, a chain of cement-lined walls, an irrigation scheme, an embankment across a marsh, a bridge across a river. Major projects, a telegraph line to Abuja, a pipe-borne water supply for Minna, electricity for Bida, a teacher-training center, a new trunk road to the north, must await the pleasure of the central government. In the way of less ambitious schemes, however, there was much that we could do with our own resources now that the money was assured.

That evening we gave a party at the Residency, where the discussions of the morning were resumed in more informal surroundings, and the friendly feelings already established took firmer root. Niger Province, so long little more than an administrative expression, was well on its way to becoming a living force.

II

Not only in Niger was the ferment beginning to work. Throughout the North contentment with ancient ways was beginning to

break down under the impact of new ideas and new experiences. Now, hard on the heels of the Ten Year Plan, came the publication of a White Paper outlining political changes. These would put an immediate term to the long-cherished isolation of the Northern peoples and pitchfork them into the modern world, where they would have to fight for the survival of their system of government and their way of life.

The proposals, conceived originally in the mind of Sir Bernard Bourdillon, had been given shape and impetus by his successor, Sir Arthur Richards. In framing them, the Governor had in mind the wide differences in religion, in language, in customs, and in aspirations that existed, not only in the three groups of provinces, for in 1939 the old Southern Provinces had been divided into two groups known as the Eastern and Western Provinces, but also in large and influential communities within those groups of provinces. It was proposed that each of the three groups, from now onward to be known as regions, should have its own House of Assembly and, in the case of the North and later the West, its own House of Chiefs. These Regional Houses would advise upon the annual estimates and upon legislation affecting their regions. Power to legislate and to raise revenue would remain with a new Legislative Council to which Regional Houses would elect an equal number of representatives from among their own members. In all Houses there would be African majorities. Thus, with the representatives of the provinces working together in the Regional Houses and the representatives of those Houses themselves associating in a central legislature, the Governor hoped that a sense of national unity might soon be born.

For the first time the North would take part in the councils of Nigeria, and the chiefs and educated classes, as a whole, welcomed the new proposals. But there was also some criticism. About this time there came into prominence a young man named Abubakar Imam, whose influence on the thinking of the younger generation of the North during the crucial years that were to follow has never been adequately recognized outside Northern Nigeria. This was largely because his writings were almost entirely in the vernacular, for which reason they attracted only fluctuating

interest in Britain and very little more in Lagos. But their effect in the North was none the less dynamic for that.

Abubakar Imam, then thirty-four years of age, came of a cultured Fulani family. He had been educated at Katsina College, where he eventually became a teacher of English and author of the first Hausa novels and a number of textbooks. When, therefore, a weekly newspaper in Hausa was launched, he was the obvious choice as editor. He named the paper *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, which means "truth is worth more than a penny," the price of each issue at the time.

In 1943 Imam had been chosen to represent the North in a West African press delegation to the United Kingdom, one of the members of which was a Dr. Azikiwe, soon to become the best known of Nigerian politicians. While in England he had twice met Lord Lugard, to whom he confided his growing anxiety at the way things were moving in the North. He claimed that the British administration as a whole had failed to adjust its thinking to the times, and he was critical of the apparent lack of sympathy of white officials, as a class, for the rising generation of educated Northerners. They did not invite them to their houses, preferring, it seemed, the society of the chiefs and their councilors, many of whom he claimed were backward in their outlook.

There was more than a little substance in Imam's criticisms, but as regards relationships in general, the point should be made that whereas educated Southerners had adopted European social customs, "table manners" and the like, Northerners of all classes still normally preferred their own way of life. For this reason, in our part of the world, entertainment had been so far restricted to decorous tea parties and the drinking of fruit drinks. But a beginning had to be made, and my wife, now fluent in Hausa, and I had already begun to include Northerners among our lunch and dinner guests, though many of them needed much persuasion.

To take up again the story of Abubakar Imam, a number of the criticisms embodied in the Lugard correspondence were repeated later in an editorial in *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*. This editorial, which also criticized the new constitution because it made no provision for ordinary people and, in particular, the younger generation to express their views, created considerable interest

in the United Kingdom. An English translation was broadcast over all the B.B.C.'s overseas services. The broadcast began, "I am a Hausa schoolmaster studying in London at the University. A most interesting document has just come into my hands. . . ." That Hausa schoolmaster, also named Abubakar, was Malam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, concerning whom much more was soon to be heard.

We ourselves did not meet Imam until 1946, after the events just described. He came to Niger Province to report for his paper on the progress of our development plans. We were attracted at once by his candor and enthusiasm. Ideas tumbled from him so fast that even his scurrying speech could scarcely keep pace with them. But he was still suspect in high quarters, and except in Abuja, where the chief was of his generation and of his way of thinking, it was not always easy for me to insure him a friendly welcome. The result of his tour of the province, however, was a series of articles that greatly pleased his late hosts. The Hausa language lends itself admirably to vivid journalism and Imam was a master of his craft. For my wife and myself this was the beginning of an enduring friendship.

III

At this point, with the North at last on the threshold of political association with the remainder of Nigeria, an account must be given of the manner in which political thinking and political organization had developed in the Eastern and Western Provinces. Up to a few years before the Second World War, organized political activity in Nigeria had been almost entirely confined to Lagos, the home of the few newspapers of consequence published in the territory. The first major political party, the Nigerian Democratic party, had been formed in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay, a Lagosian civil engineer. Herbert Macaulay was not liked by the Lagos intellectuals, who disapproved of the dubious financial operations with which his name was periodically associated and of his methods in general. But even a prison sentence for the embezzlement of trust funds did not dim his popularity with the Lagos crowd, to whom social aberrations of this nature mattered

little. His dynamic personality and his genius for flamboyant oratory carried him to their hearts, and as far as they were concerned he could do little wrong.

It was not until 1934 that a rival organization took the field. In that year the Lagos Youth Movement, later to be renamed the Nigerian Youth Movement, was formed, primarily to fight the higher education policy of the Nigerian government, which in the eyes of the party leaders was designed to establish second-class educational standards and thus perpetuate the inferior status of Nigerian-born civil servants. These leaders were also bitterly opposed to the system of indirect rule and to the operation of customary law, as opposed to English law, which was an integral part of that system. As citizens of Lagos they subscribed generally to the British way of life, and they objected strongly to being subject to the arbitrary authority of the chiefs in the provinces, whose decisions, they maintained, were influenced by the British administration. Herein lay one of the fundamental differences between North and South, for in the North the traditional method of government was still accepted, almost without question, by all classes of the community, though the manner in which it was permitted to operate was already becoming the subject of criticism.

One of the leading members of the Central Executive Committee of the Youth Movement was Dr. Azikiwe. An Ibo by birth, he had spent nine years in the United States before returning to Nigeria to take up a life of journalism before embarking on the political career which was to carry him to the forefront of affairs in Nigeria and to make him a figure of international importance.

From its inception the Nigerian Youth Movement had been largely dominated by the Yoruba intelligentsia of Lagos and the Western Provinces. It was possibly this fact that now led Dr. Azikiwe to urge his fellow Ibos of the Eastern Provinces, who had hitherto remained aloof from national politics, to enter the arena that now lay open before them. To achieve his purpose he had first to imbue them with a pride of race and a sense of destiny. This he proceeded to do by lauding their individual triumphs and their achievements in the field of sport, social service, and

economic enterprise in the pages of the *West African Pilot*, a paper which he himself had founded.

These tactics at first irritated and, when they began to succeed, alarmed the Yoruba leaders of the NYM. While they had to admit that there could be no united Nigeria without Ibo participation, when they read in the *Pilot* leaders such as one which was headed "The Ibos are coming" they began to suspect that their hitherto unchallenged supremacy in the political field was about to be threatened. The Ibo, on the other hand, enterprising by nature and already driven by land hunger to seek their fortunes far afield in large numbers, responded at once to this call for unity. For the first time in their history they had found a champion and a leader and they gratefully took him to their hearts.

From this point onward, disagreement within the upper hierarchy of the NYM grew, and in 1941 Dr. Azikiwe ("Zik," as he was now universally known) left the movement. The parent body in Lagos, thus split asunder, began to lose heart. The main center of activity now moved to Ibadan, where a Mr. Obafemi Awolowo had begun to make a name for himself in political circles. As an antidote to what it considered to be a purely sectional approach to Nigerian problems, the Youth Movement launched a new daily named the *Daily Service* which at once found itself in hot conflict with Dr. Azikiwe's *Pilot*.

For some years throughout Nigeria, wherever education on European lines had begun to take root, a wide diversity of literary societies, youth leagues, tribal unions, and other social bodies had sprung up like mushrooms. Their impact, however, and their interests were predominantly local, and their existence was often transitory. Now, at the dawning of national consciousness, these movements began to coalesce on a tribal basis. No major tribal group wished to be left out in the cold when the time came for the British to hand over the reins of government.

The best organized of these new cultural organizations was Dr. Azikiwe's Ibo Federal Union, soon to be renamed the Ibo State Union. The Ibo were already established in tightly knit communities throughout Nigeria and beyond its borders as traders, contractors, transport owners, and subordinate government

officials. They were peculiarly adroit at furthering their own interests both corporately and as individuals, an aptitude which did little to endear them to the more easygoing communities among whom they had settled and at whose expense they largely made their livelihood.

Dr. Azikiwe's next step was to launch a new political party on a national basis, and in August, 1944, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons was born, with the perennially ebullient Herbert Macaulay as President and Zik himself as General Secretary. The NCNC received enthusiastic backing in the Eastern Region, its spiritual home, a very considerable degree of support in Lagos and in many parts of the West, and none whatsoever among Northerners, for with them political consciousness was still unborn.

In the meantime, Mr. Awolowo, now on his way to London to read for the bar, was wondering to himself how he could create among the Yoruba the same sense of "ethnic solidarity" that had been achieved among the Ibo so as to insure "a strong and harmonious federal union among the peoples of Nigeria."¹ A year later he, together with a group of friends, founded in London the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a society of the descendants of Oduduwa, the legendary ancestor of the Yoruba race. By so doing he hoped to raise the morale of his fellow Yoruba, weakened by disunity and by a creeping sense of inferiority in the face of the growing challenge of the more dynamic Ibo. Although the new movement was successful in London, a further three years were to pass before it took root in the Yoruba homeland.

Such was the situation when in 1946 the Richards Constitution was accepted by the Legislative Council, despite fierce opposition from outside the House by the NCNC on the grounds that the method of appointment of members to the new Houses was "undemocratic" and that public opinion had not been sounded in advance.

Undeterred by failure the NCNC leaders now planned to seek a mandate from the country as a whole in support of a delegation to London. This delegation would seek revision of the new con-

1. Obafemi Awolowo, *Awo: The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 168.

stitution. To obtain this mandate they assembled a strong team of speakers whom they launched on a tour of the principal centers of the country.

Thus, Southern politicians were to be heard for the first time in the market places of the North, or at least in the market places of those towns that had large settlements of Ibo and Yoruba and other Southern tribes. And the Northern leaders were not to relish the experience, which more than anything else cured them of any surviving illusions that they could continue to ignore the world around them.

Minna was one of the first towns in the North visited by the NCNC delegations. A meeting was held in the market place which was attended by some hundreds of Southerners and a sprinkling of curious Northerners to whom occasions such as this were a novelty. The province as a whole remained unmoved—until accounts of the meeting, and of others in the North, began to appear in the Lagos press. The NCNC reporters had certainly let their imaginations run riot. There were vivid descriptions of wildly enthusiastic crowds, thousands strong, and of generous donations to the cause. The North, it was claimed, was giving the delegation its full support. But Northerners living in the towns that had been visited were well aware that these reports were not true. What did it all mean?

The first repercussions from Niger Province were to come from the Emir of Abuja. Sulemanu Barau, the sixth Emir, was descended from the old Hausa dynasty of Zaria which had been dispossessed by the Fulani in the days of Shehu dan Fodio. He was a young man of deep convictions and a strong sense of duty toward his people. Apart from Emir Yahaya of Gwandu, he was the first educated Northern chief, and although he lacked the presence of the great Fulani emirs, he had a quiet dignity of his own and was liked and respected by his fellows. At the time of which I am writing, he was a worried man. He had come, accompanied by his brother Hassan, to ask my advice about the press reports on the NCNC delegation's visit to Niger Province. "Why," he said,

do Lagos papers claim that a crowd of six thousand attended the Minna meeting? That is the entire population of the town, and my

people who were in Minna at the time say that only two or three hundred Southerners were there. Why do the NCNC claim to represent Niger Province? What about Abuja, what about Bida, and Kontagora, and all the other towns? If these stories are not denied, people in Lagos and in England will believe them. But if we write to the Lagos papers the letter will not be published. What are we to do?

I suggested to the Emir that he and his brother should compose a letter giving the plain facts. It should be over his brother's signature. He should not allow himself to become directly involved. He could send this letter to an English-language weekly that was published under the auspices of the Public Relations Department.

The simultaneous publication of this letter and of another on the same lines from Zaria itself brought rapid results. In the North letters came from several provinces all denying the accuracy of the accounts of meetings held there and all rejecting the claim of the NCNC to speak for the North. The Abuja letter was repeated at greater length in *Gaskiya*, and in that paper, too, many more letters appeared. But from the Lagos papers concerned there came a storm of angry protest until government stepped in and insisted that as far as the English weekly was concerned the correspondence must cease. A government-controlled paper, edited by a government official, must not become embroiled in political controversy.

Such niceties were difficult for the unsophisticated Northerner to understand. To them it was a simple matter of truth versus falsehood. But by now the grass had been set thoroughly alight, and soon there were few large towns in the twelve provinces of the North where there were not a number of people who did not, at last, realize that if the Northerners wished to be masters of their own destiny they must at once bestir themselves.

Only a handful of young malams had responded to the NCNC appeal for support. Of these a few were influenced by an inborn dislike of the traditional system. The majority were ex-government or NA employees who had fallen foul of authority. A conviction for theft or embezzlement automatically debarred them from further official employment, and a number took to militant politics for a living and as a means of revenging themselves on

the society that had rejected them. All in all, the NCNC delegation had done the North, and Nigeria as a whole, a great service. The years of apathy were now ended, and though at the time the contrary seemed the case, the road to a united Nigeria lay at last open.

The next move in the game was to come from Malam Aliyu Bida, the onetime headmaster of Bida Middle School, who had come a long way since I first knew him as a newly appointed member of the Emir's council when I was D.O. there in 1938. Then, a commoner among titleholders, he needed all his native wit and shrewdness to maintain his position. Now he was the acknowledged leader of the small but influential band of English-speaking Northerners in the province.

One day, finding himself in Minna on NA business, he telephoned me to ask if he might come to see me. There was much on his mind, and he would be grateful for advice. That evening, sitting on the lawn sipping orange squash and smoking cigarette after cigarette, he unburdened himself.

What is the use with all this talk in the South of independence in the near future, of planning local development schemes in Niger Province and elsewhere in the North? What is the use of the North developing its institutions in scattered pockets? Of what value will they be to a disunited people with no real desire either for education or for unity? The Provincial Development Committee has given educated people from all parts of the Provinces opportunity to discuss the future, and there are many people who are as anxious as I am. Niger is only a small province. There are no links binding it to other Provinces. If independence comes too quickly the North will be at the mercy of the more progressive South. This the Northern peoples will certainly resist by force. What can be done now? The North is poor, the South is wealthy. The South has its own home-born lawyers, doctors, and engineers. The North has produced, as yet, no lawyers, no engineers, and has only one doctor. There are twenty schools in the South for every one in the North. The South has its own newspapers, and even the railway and the post and telegraph offices are staffed by Southerners. More important still, the Southerners have learned to organize themselves in unions and political parties.

He had many friends, he went on to say, in other provinces who thought as he did, but as I knew, the main towns in the North were scattered over a vast area hundreds of miles wide, and letters

took so long that there seemed to be no way in which they could organize themselves in a common cause.

I said in reply that when the new constitution got under way in a few months' time there would be opportunities for leaders from all twelve provinces to meet and plan for the future. If they did not agree with the policies of the NCNC or any other political party they should get together and say so. I realized that they disliked party politics and party politicians, but they would have to form a political party themselves if they wanted to make their voices heard. In the meantime, the least that they could do was to band themselves together in a cultural organization with branches in every town. But, I suggested, they should avoid trying to build up anything that was based on tribe or class or religion. They might, for instance, call their organization SMAT, i.e., Sarakuna, Malamai, Attajirai, Talakawa, an association representing the chiefs, the educated classes, the merchants, and the peasantry.

While the chiefs should not let themselves become involved in political controversy, their support at this stage was essential. This was not only because of their experience and prestige but because, as he, Malam Aliyu, well knew, it was to them that the people looked and it would be on their attitude that all would depend. The great majority had their people's interests at heart, and if it were explained to them how important were the issues at stake, I was sure that they would be sympathetic. Malam Aliyu listened to what I had to say, sighed deeply, stubbed out his cigarette, drained his glass, and took his leave. His mind was made up but it was to be many months before he and his friends could lay the foundations of Northern unity which was their first objective.

IV

Toward the end of 1946 I became entitled by seniority to take my seat in the Legislative Council of Nigeria as an *ex officio* member. The final meeting under the 1922 constitution had been called for December 9, and I asked leave to attend, knowing that this would be my last opportunity for some time, for under the new constitution, which was due to come into force on January

1, one Resident only from each region would sit on the official benches.

The Governor himself would not preside on this occasion, for he was on leave. His outspokenness, whether in exhortation or in condemnation, was a byword, and I should have greatly liked to have heard him in person. Earlier in the year he had made it clear that with the inauguration of the constitution that bore his name he intended to put an end to the rigid control exercised by Lagos over the provinces. In Kipling's words, "The toad beneath the harrow knows exactly where each tooth point goes,"² and we who had for so many years seen the peoples among whom we served held back by what the Governor considered to be the excessive centralization of authority in Lagos rejoiced to hear the news. Having become "increasingly conscious of the cleavage of interest and outlook between Lagos and the rest of Nigeria,"³ the Governor had observed, due measures, long overdue, would be introduced that would make it possible for departmental heads to travel and think. He had also announced that government expenditure in the North had been found, on analysis, to fall far short of what was due in return for revenue collected. This we had long suspected. From now on, each region would exercise control over its own internal finances, aided by capital grants and an annual subvention from the central government.

Ordinary people in Nigeria appeared to welcome the new constitution. But the more aggressive organs of the local press would have none of it. This was scarcely surprising. The responsibility for choosing the provincial members of the new Houses of Assembly would lie with the traditional leaders of the country and their advisers and not with an as yet untutored and infinitely gullible electorate. Worth rather than wordiness would be their yardstick, and the new generation of professional politicians, which was still suspect beyond the immediate circle of their admirers, had little chance of being selected. Their time would come later when the people as a whole were more adjusted

2. Rudyard Kipling, "Pagett, M.P.," *Departmental Ditties and Other Verses* (5th ed.; Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, 1890).

3. "Governor's Speech and Address to Legislative Council on March 18, 1946," Sessional Paper No. 8, 1946 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1946).

to party politics. But there was little comfort for them in this thought.

It was against this background that the old Legislative Council assembled, for the last time, on that December morning of 1946. Meetings were customarily held in a paneled room above the entrance to the red brick Secretariat Building on the Marina. At one end of the room stood a dais on which the President sat. On the walls hung fading photographs of past Governors and of earlier generations of legislators, the white faces greatly exceeding the black. Below the President's dais sat the tall, slim figure of Mr. Ade Ojo, the Yoruba Clerk to the Council, and on either side and facing him, a score or more officials and a lesser number of Africans.

There was little business, and the meeting only lasted for three days, quite long enough, however, to make it obvious why the officials found proceedings dreary and the Nigerians found them frustrating. With the overwhelming official majority the outcome in any conflict of views was a foregone conclusion, though in the face of strong unofficial opposition, government could, and would, modify its policies.

The two Houses of the newly created Northern Regional Council, the House of Chiefs and the House of Assembly, were due to meet for the first time some six weeks later. Procedure would follow a simplified form of standard parliamentary practice at Westminster. But there was one difficulty. What about prayers? The Northern House of Chiefs would be overwhelmingly Muslim; so, too, would be the unofficial side of the House of Assembly, and in Muslim eyes, "there is but one God, Muhammed is the Apostle of God." To Muslims, Jesus Christ, Annabi Isa, is one of the major prophets, no more than that. And by the same token they totally reject the concept of the Trinity. What form of prayer, then, would be acceptable to Muslims and Christians alike?

But when the Sultan and other leading emirs were consulted the problem proved less acute than had been feared. Northern Nigerian Muslim leaders, though orthodox and devout, were tolerant toward members of the Christian faith in recognition, no doubt, of the services rendered by Christian missions to the

pagan communities within their midst. The chiefs would admit, it seemed, any form of prayer acceptable to Christians provided only that all references to Jesus Christ and to the Trinity were excluded.

The Hausa language, with its wealth of Arabic, and Elizabethan English have something in common, and the superbly worded Prayer for the Sovereign that begins "Almighty God . . . the only ruler of princes . . ." and the equally familiar "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings . . ." read majestically in either tongue. Both prayers, together with a third, were later formally adopted and were read in both languages before the commencement of business on every day on which either House sat.

When on January 20, 1947, the House of Assembly met for the first time, despite the drab surroundings and the colorless attire of the twelve Residents and other officials on the government side, there was an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation. Nothing like this had ever happened before. How would the provincial members, many of whom were old friends whom Residents like myself had known as NA officials for many years past, face up to their new responsibilities and to the unfamiliar parliamentary procedure?

The first day was taken up with formalities and with an inaugural address by Eric Thompstone, who as senior Resident was President of the House. On the second day, however, after the election of five members to represent the North in the new Legislative Council, one of whom was Aliyu Bida, now invested with the title of Makama, the formal moving of the adjournment gave the unofficial members the opportunity for which they had waited. Now they could freely voice their fears and aspirations and proclaim their intentions.

Third to rise was the member for Bauchi Province, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Abubakar of the Black Rock, the name of the little town in which he had been reared. Formerly headmaster of Bauchi Middle School and a member of the Emir of Bauchi's council, he had recently returned from a year's secondment to London University. Now, casually throwing the long sleeve of his gown over his shoulder, a mannerism with which we were

soon to become familiar, he sought the permission of the House to dispense with an interpreter.

Then followed, first in English, then in Hausa, an oration the memory of which still stirs me to this day. He began quietly.

This is a great day, a new chapter in our history is about to open. . . . Happily we have got foundations on which to build . . . our own laws and forms of government, our own traditions and much respected customs. . . . But many of these will need reform . . . and some must be abolished if we are to compete with the world around us. . . . [W]e must be open to new ideas . . . and I want our British officers to realize that now is the time that we, as their pupils, need all their patience and courage. . . . I want the Northern Provinces to change into a modern Northern Nigeria, not into some sort of artificial civilisation not European or African.

Then, raising his voice a little, and speaking with even greater deliberation than before, he said, "We are now facing great danger. . . . [T]here are men who thirst for power and who would disrupt the happiness of the people for their own personal ambitions. We must do something to show Britain and the world that these self-styled leaders do not in any way represent us. . . . We have our own leaders whom we have chosen." Finally came the peroration. "Now is not a time for talking but a time for doing. . . . The progress of the Northern Provinces is the business of every man, be he the Emir or the village farmer. . . . [L]et us, God helping us, work as a team and move forward together."

So this was the new North. I could not have been the only British official present who felt a lump in his throat as he listened. So much for the pretensions of the NCNC; so much, too, for those who thought that the authority of the chiefs was inviolable and that all was well in the Northern world. Here was a challenge which could not be refused.

Two months later the new Legislative Council met for the first time. Of the four chiefs chosen by the Northern House of Chiefs to represent them, three—the Emirs of Gwandu, Katsina, and Abuja—were old friends. When accounts of the meeting began to filter through in private letters and in the columns of the press, it became plain that Abubakar, speaking for the North, had lost no time in carrying the war onto "enemy ground," though

the "enemy," in the persons of the three elected NCNC members for Lagos, had boycotted the House.

Having first strongly voiced his view that the people of the North should have a greater say in their own affairs and that the powers of the chiefs should be defined, he proceeded scornfully to reject the claim of the NCNC to represent them. "The Northern people are men themselves and do not ask for other people to fight for them. We do want independence and we shall demand it when the time is ripe . . . and fight for it if necessary. But, if the British quitted Nigeria now . . . the Northern people would continue their interrupted conquest to the sea."⁴ A reference to the Fulani wars of the previous century which had brought their raiding cavalry to within one hundred and fifty miles of Lagos. As a startled House listened to these words there surely could have been little doubt in anyone's mind that the supposedly medieval North, with its ancient traditions and outmoded system of government, had almost overnight become a dynamic factor in Nigerian politics.

V

By now our days in Minna were numbered. During our time here I had heard periodically from the Sultan, and once, when on his way south to say goodbye to the men of the Third Brigade on the eve of their departure for Burma, he had driven seventy miles out of his way to visit us. "When," he had always said, "are you coming home to Sokoto? We think of you as being on loan here. We want you back." For our part, no prospect could have greater appeal. To end my career as Resident at Sokoto had long been the summit of my ambitions. We had served in Niger Province without a break, apart from leave, since early 1943. New ideas were needed, for I was becoming stale. With my eyes turned to Sokoto I wrote to Sir John Patterson, the Chief Commissioner, asking him if I might be transferred at the end of my next leave. By that time Sir John himself would have left us after more than thirty years of Nigeria. He would be succeeded by Eric Thomp-

4. *Nigeria Legislative Council Debates*, March 24, 1947 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1947).

stone, then Resident, Kano, whose father had been Principal Medical Officer in Zungeru in Lugard's time.

After some weeks of waiting the answer came. At the end of my present tour I should put my belongings into store. On my return I should be going to Sokoto. I should not have long to wait. My wife had already preceded me home, this time on what was almost a pioneer trip by a new service just opened by BOAC directly across the desert from Kano using Yorks, which were converted wartime bombers. Four weeks later, I followed her by the same route.

During the four and a half years that we had spent in Niger Province much had been accomplished, despite a constant shortage of almost all we needed in the way of staff, plant, and materials. A Resident, however, is as nothing unless he has the support of his D.O.'s and departmental officers, and for what we had achieved in those difficult years the credit must go to a long succession of D.O.'s and doctors, engineers and Education Officers, Agricultural Officers and Police Officers, Inspectors of Works and well sinkers, Forestry Officers and Veterinary Officers. In a book such as this there is not the space to record either their names or their achievements. But I remember them all with gratitude, and I know that their work endured.

VI

While on leave I attended a ten-day summer school on local government in Africa at Queen's College, Cambridge, which had been organized by the Colonial Office. When I originally applied for the school I had done so with some misgivings. As long as I could remember, there had been a deep-rooted prejudice against the Colonial Office and all its works in the minds of the majority of officers serving overseas, particularly those serving in the provinces: too much paper and not enough realism, and too many instances of officers home on leave being patronized by men many years younger than themselves who had never been near the countries with whose affairs they dealt.

That this unfortunate image was now to be corrected lay to the credit of one man, Andrew Cohen, at that time head of the

African Division of the Office, and the chairman of the summer school which I was about to attend in the company of sixteen members of the Colonial Office, rather more than thirty "lecturers, visitors, and observers," and twice that number of officers from more than a dozen African territories.

Perhaps the two most provocative addresses of the several to which we listened came from women: Miss Margery (now Dame Margery) Perham, then reader in colonial administration at Oxford, who spoke on African nationalism, and Mrs. Elspeth Huxley, the traveler and authoress, whose subject was race relations in East Africa. Margery Perham threw down the gauntlet to complacency in reminding the many who needed reminding that African nationalism was not the disease of a few, it was the logical outcome of our policies, the child of our own fathering. We should learn to live with the forces that we had ourselves released and view with greater sympathy and understanding the dawning consciousness of a wonderful new world in the minds of young Africans now completing their education in Britain.

All that Margery Perham preached was fundamentally true. But there was another side to the picture, and some of the more hard-bitten among her audience, who had seen the excesses that young nationalists and their followers could commit when under the influence of rhetoric, tended to prefer Elspeth Huxley's down to earth realism, for she, after all, had grown up in Kenya among *The Flame Trees of Thika*, the title she was to give to her story of her early days. But the dominant impression that most of us were to carry away was that of the tall, fair-haired figure of Andrew Cohen striding restlessly up and down, deep in conversation, or sprawling untidily, a half-demolished pencil between his lips, behind the chairman's table.

Looking back, perhaps the most significant thing about the school was the degree to which it brought together men and women from two worlds that very rarely met. On the one hand there was the world of the three score administrators, most of whom had spent from twenty to thirty years of their lives in Africa, speaking the language of the people among whom they served and becoming familiar with their customs. On the other hand there was the world of, for instance, Miss Rita Hinden, Sec-

retary of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, of Mr. Carol Johnston, Secretary of the parliamentary Labour party, of Mr. R. E. Wraith of the London School of Economics, and of all who, like them, shared a deep interest in Africa and its problems. This interest, however, in the majority of cases was largely academic, for at that time they saw their Africa through the eyes of the new generation of students, journalists, and professional men now coming to Britain in increasing numbers.

Serving officers like myself, for our part, and particularly those that came from remote provinces, did not know nearly enough of the new Africa. Africa, to most of us, was the Africa of the legion of the little men, the peasant farmers in their millions, the small traders, the village craftsmen. An Africa of which the academic world in general knew little and, therefore, we feared, recked less.

At that time the prevailing belief among those in Britain who were interested in African affairs yet lacked direct knowledge of its people and their ways was that the remedy for all their woes was large and immediate doses of democracy as practiced in Britain. We of the Colonial Service were more cautious, particularly those of us who came from territories where ancient cultures and long-established systems of government still proved acceptable to the vast majority of the population. Indeed, as far as Northern Nigeria was concerned, this summer school was the scene of the opening shots in a long battle for the rights of the peoples of that country to manage their affairs in accordance with traditional rather than textbook methods.

Thanks to the school, it was possible, for the first time, for many people of opposing points of view to argue amicably over pints of Royston ale or, in Miss Perham's case, over a cup of tea at the University Arms Hotel. Although I failed to shake her conviction that, politically, Northern Nigeria had stagnated for twenty years and more, ever since Sir Donald Cameron had retired, I at least extracted a promise that as soon as possible she would come back to Nigeria and see for herself.

This summer school, the first of a long succession, was to mark the beginning of a new era. From now on the relationships between us and our opposite numbers in the Colonial Office were

to undergo an almost complete transformation. Their visits to us would soon become more frequent and more welcome, for now they would often come as personal friends. And although there was to be no abatement in the flow of paper, we learned to treat it with greater discrimination and more tolerance, even when, at flood height, it threatened to burst the banks of our endurance.

PENALTIES OF ISOLATION

1948-1950

I

Three days before Christmas in 1947 I was back in Minna, determined to coax a lorry and trailer out of the Public Works Department and my household goods out of store in time to be away on my four-hundred-mile journey to Sokoto before everything closed down for the approaching holiday. I had decided to enter my new province by the "back way" through its southernmost emirate, Yauri. I should be using the main road often enough before long, journeying to and from Kaduna to attend the House of Assembly. Besides, the thought of a quiet Christmas by the Niger at Yelwa, the present capital of Yauri, carried a special appeal, for the Emir was an old friend whom I had not seen for some time.

Yauri was one of the second group of Hausa states, the *banza bakwai* (the illegitimate seven) that attained prominence some time after the emergence of the original seven, the Hausa *bakwai* of tradition. But during the previous century it had maintained its existence with difficulty in the face of converging attacks by the Fulani from Gwandu and Kontagora. Nothing now remained of its thousand-year-old capital, Bin Yauri, but a score or so of humble grass-roofed huts in a forest of towering baobab encircled at a distance by the grass-covered ruins of its once formidable earthen defenses.

On my arrival at Yelwa, I first turned aside to call on the Emir. Along the entire length of the crowded waterfront, canoes of all sizes, from giant twenty-ton freight carriers to tiny two-man dugouts, lay moored or beached while passengers and crew carried on their business in the nearby market or at the trading stores on the edge of the town. Meanwhile, on the river itself,

more canoes, in a never ending flow, slid swiftly downstream carrying goats, sheep, and poultry, woven fiber mats, and earthenware toward the teeming markets of Iboland and the Niger Delta. And on their way back from those markets, moving very slowly and hugging the bank to avoid the swirling current, came the upstream traffic, paddlers and polers grunting in unison, their bodies glistening with perspiration, as they smote the water together or thrust heavily on their twelve-foot palm rib poles. They had been many weeks on their way, but their cargoes of palm oil and imported cotton goods, enamelware, haberdashery, bangles, and bijouterie should bring good prices both from the Yelwa merchants and from the hucksters who would peddle them in towns and villages far from the river.

At the turn of the century there had been a military garrison in Yelwa, and after it had been withdrawn a D.O. had remained here. But Abdullahi, the present Emir, was a man of great ability and integrity, and for many years an occasional visit from the D.O. at Birnin Kebbi and an annual visit from the Resident had been enough to insure efficient administration. Emir Abdullahi was a tall, heavily built man with a deep-chested laugh and an unquenchable zest for life, despite his years. Fearlessly outspoken, he was a bad man to cross wherever the interests of Yauri and its peoples were involved. He had a son named Tukur in whom he took great and justifiable pride. Tukur, who in the years ahead was destined to succeed him, had been educated at Katsina College. He was, to an almost uncanny degree, the replica of what his father must have been as a young man. There was the same charm, the merry twinkle in the eye, the irrepressible sense of humor, and, already, signs of the same shrewdness and steadfastness that had helped his father control the affairs of Yauri so successfully for so long.

A day after leaving Yelwa I reached Sokoto, and as I drove down the main avenue and past the screening clump of feathery neem trees into the Residency grounds an almost overwhelming feeling of thankfulness came over me to be "home" again after my five years' absence. Sokoto had been my first province in the North, and I had in later years been, more than once, D.O. of each of the three divisions.

It is difficult to define, or explain, the spell that Sokoto cast over so many Europeans, despite the harshness of the climate and the austerity of the living conditions. Perhaps, quite simply, it sprang from the charm and unaffected friendliness we encountered on every hand. Whether it was the Sultan in his council chamber or the malam at his desk, the farmer on his rice patch or the fisherman on the marsh, everywhere there was the same unquestioning acceptance of their own particular *Turawa* (plural of *Ba-Ture*, word applied to Europeans in general) as being almost as much a part of the scene as themselves. Once accepted, one became to them, for all time, a *Ba Sakkwache*—a Man of Sakkwato (Sokoto).

Within days, however, this feeling of relief was to be succeeded by a sense of shock as I began to realize that as far as Sokoto Province was concerned, the Ten Year Plan, and all that it promised, was still little more than a distant dream. Handicapped as we were by our remoteness from railhead, our badly battered roads, and our primitive telegraph system, it was plain that nothing less than an outright drive to secure a wider and more generous recognition of our needs would win for us a fair share of the staff, equipment, and material now at last arriving in Nigeria in a steady stream.

At least it was comforting to know that the Nigerian government had, by the award to the region of a two-million-pound "under equipment" grant, at last begun to make amends for the years of neglect from which the remoter provinces in the North, in particular, had suffered. And now that Northern political leaders had begun to see, with their own eyes, the scope and pattern of government expenditure in the past in and around Lagos and in the larger towns along the coastal belt, criticism and complaints, in both the House of Assembly and Legislative Council, were growing in intensity.

To return to my own immediate responsibilities. Lessons learned in Niger could now be put into effect. First a survey of our present state and future plans would be prepared and printed which would, this time, be circulated not merely within the province but in Kaduna and in Lagos and in London—anywhere, in fact, where we could arouse interest and secure allies.

Somehow this state of dreadful isolation must be brought to an end. Sokoto and its two million inhabitants mattered, and Lagos and London must be made aware of their needs. In the meantime, we would do our best to carry out the projects that seemed to us most urgent.

I had returned to Sokoto at a fortunate time. The clamor for progress was growing in intensity throughout the province, and we were, at last, getting back the younger members of the administration who had joined the forces at the outbreak of war. In their company came the first of the postwar generation of Administrative Officers, many of whom had served with the Nigerians in Burma, and a sprinkling of recently demobilized departmental officers. This suited me well, for I found myself more "on a beam" with men who had service experience behind them than with many of those who had come to Nigeria between the wars. The younger men were more zestful, more enterprising, and less hidebound in their outlook than many of their seniors, and such qualities as these were badly needed to suit the changing times.

With all these problems on my mind my days were fully occupied, but when evening came I began to wish that so long a time did not lie ahead before my wife would be able to join me. A Resident's life in a bush province was a lonely life. During his D.O. days he had been able to have his personal friends to his house as often as he wished. But as Resident he would have to be host to everyone in the Station in turn. Still, there could be compensations. I had never forgotten how, in Ruxton's day in the Cameroons, everything seemed to center on the "Schloss" and how remarkable was the *esprit de corps* thus engendered throughout the province by that unusual and well-loved couple.

Residency parties were, undoubtedly, the best catalyst for the jealousies and bouts of ill feeling between individuals and cliques that every hot season brought to most outlying Stations. The Residency, too, was the ideal meeting place for Africans and Europeans. Gone were the days when the Sultan could only see privileged Europeans by special arrangement and only when accompanied by an Administrative Officer. Now, whenever we entertained on any scale, he and his councilors and visiting dignitaries

from other emirates moved to and fro among our guests, perfectly at ease and radiating friendliness.

In November, 1947, Sir Arthur Richards, created Lord Milverton in recognition of his great services, had left Nigeria on retirement. Under his guidance, Nigeria, created by Lord Lugard out of a bedlam of tribes and races and welded by his successors into a functioning administrative entity, had suddenly become a nation in the making. Politics, no longer the preserve of a handful of professionals and their devotees, were gradually becoming the concern of every thinking private individual and of everyone in a position of responsibility in every province in Nigeria. From these beginnings, for those with the wit to perceive it, the road toward independence lay clear ahead.

Already events in India and in Southeast Asia had encouraged sincere and serious-minded politicians in Lagos and the South to hope and plan for freedom from British rule within a measurable span of years. But there were also in those same parts of the country, small groups of men, less well equipped with wisdom and experience, who, having drunk over-deeply of the heady wine of nationalism, were talking wildly of violence and of arson and hinting darkly of plots to massacre Europeans in their beds. The great mass of the population, however, remained unimpressed, and responsible politicians agreed with the Governor's comments on the prevalent "glib talk about dying for Nigeria." "Nigeria," he had said, "needs men who will live for her, a far harder and more exacting task."¹

Now he had left us. In his place Sir John Macpherson, the J. S. Macpherson of the days of our ill-starred flying club, would be coming back after ten years' absence from Nigeria. This was welcome news. Even more welcome was the announcement that the new Governor intended to tour the North soon after assuming office and that the first province that he would visit would be Sokoto.

A Governor's first visit was always an ordeal, particularly when, as in this case, the Resident and his wife had only very recently arrived in the province. But almost as soon as Sir John and Lady Macpherson stepped down from their twin-engined

1. *Nigeria Legislative Council Debates*, August 28, 1947, p. 12.

Dove the tension disappeared. "I feel," he observed as we shook hands, "as though I should be dangling a large L plate behind me." A characteristic opening, and we were at once disarmed, though not deluded. Sokoto and its administration were, I knew, about to come under the scrutiny of a discerning eye. We were on trial, and we should have to prove ourselves.

We could, at least, lead with a court card. As the Governor had never before visited the North, we had, in consultation with the Emirs of Gwandu, Argungu, and Yauri, decided to stage a provincial Durbar. There had, of course, been in the past other notable gatherings of horsemen and displays of pageantry in the North, but it had always seemed to me that, viewed as a spectacle, the effect of such gatherings was largely lost owing to a lack of timing and control and to the uninvited presence of the noisy, unkempt riff-raff of the towns that always attached itself in swarms to any procession. I now felt that the time had come to show what could be done and that the Sultan and his brother chiefs, given a lead, could stage a ceremony that, without losing any of the spontaneity and pageantry of tradition, would yet move to a climax with something of the precision and panache of a full-dress military parade. The setting would be the racecourse on the *hurumi* (the communal grazing ground outside the walls of all large towns in the far North).

We were now at the heart of the hot season when, each morning, the sun lowered at us from a brassy sky. But this day we were to be fortunate in our weather. Somewhere, away to the south, rain must have fallen during the night, for the air was clear and sparkling, and as the Governor's green-uniformed escort of Mounted Police bore down upon us the pennons on their lances fluttered in the breeze. The little polo club pavilion overlooking the racecourse had been bedecked with flags and bunting for the occasion, and as soon as the Governor and Lady Macpherson had taken their places, the vast concourse of horse and foot that faced us from the far side of the course began to move to the right across our front.

As the head of the column, wheeling inward as it followed the perimeter of the race track, turned into the straight the crowd lining the barriers opposite us began to press forward. Then a

succession of small boys in flapping knee-length *rigas*, slithering between their elders' legs, slipped through the sagging ropes to peer down the track or to race wildly across to join friends on the other side. The thin cordon of NA Police would have been overwhelmed but for the arrival of reinforcements, under a gigantic beribboned N.C.O., who flung themselves at the crowd, lashing out furiously with improvised switches at the shins of everyone in reach.

But soon the shouts of the police and the catcalls of the crowd were drowned in the thunder and rattle of drums and the blare of trumpets as the Sultan's personal bodyguard, which was leading the mile-and-a-half-long procession, bore down upon us. The curtain was up.

Soon, beyond a forest of nodding plumes and flashing lances, we could see where the Sultan himself rode, surrounded by members of his household in chain mail or quilted armor, their towering headdresses glittering in the sunshine. Over his head a giant umbrella of many colors dipped and spun as the tall scarlet-clad attendant who bore it, twirling it slowly, strove to keep pace with the curvetings and side-steppings of his master's magnificent white stallion. The Sultan himself, as befitted the Leader of the Faithful, was simply attired in white, in striking contrast to the peacock blue and crimson, the saffron and the green of those who immediately followed him.

As soon as he had come abreast of the pavilion he wheeled inward, dismounted, and advanced smiling to greet the Governor and to take his place beside him. Meanwhile, led by the members of the council, the tight-packed ranks of horsemen surged forward to the thudding of the drums, the skirling of the *algaitas*, and the deafening "Ray . . . Faa . . . ah, Ray . . . Faa . . . ah, Ray . . . Faa . . . ah" of the six-foot trumpets. Every now and again an individual rider spurred his horse into a furious gallop, then, reining it suddenly back on its haunches, raised his spear aloft in salutation.

After the council members and their entourages came the city notables with their followers and attendants, and on their flanks and to the rear there strode, gesticulating to the crowd, all the colorful characters of medieval show business. There were

sword swallows and snake charmers, tumblers and hyena tamers, their ill-favored, evil-smelling charges pulling frenziedly at their chains as they sought to escape the mounting din around them. Most prominent of all rode the Sultan's court jester in a cock's feather headdress and a monkey skin cape, his eyeballs protruding like giant marbles in mock fury from a face dyed bright blue and fringed with yellow fur.

After the last and smallest groups of Sokoto horsemen had passed by with a defiant rattle of drums there was a gap to denote the independent status of the Emir of Gwandu, whose leading men at arms, resplendent in chain mail, were already approaching. Behind them the Emir's great scarlet umbrella bobbed up and down in a sea of blue and white turbans. He, too, dismounted as soon as he had drawn level with the pavilion and, after greeting the Governor, took his place close to the Sultan. Meanwhile, in a solid phalanx, his personal following moved triumphantly forward, the horses tossing their heads as they mouthed their foam-flecked bits, making little of their quilted armor and their heavy high-pommeled saddles. After Gwandu came Argungu, and after Argungu, Yauri, each with his own contingent of mounted men in brilliant robes of many colors, with archers, axmen, and spearmen and a mad medley of musicians in close attendance. And each chief, in turn, following the same procedure, turned aside when the time came and seated himself near the Sultan.

I do not remember how many horse and foot passed before us that day. There must have been three thousand from Sokoto alone, and almost a thousand more had followed the Emirs of Gwandu, Argungu, and Yauri, scorning the distance and the pitiless April sunshine out of loyalty to their chiefs. But I do remember thinking how well this assemblage portrayed the great diversity of peoples that lived within the borders of the province. There were fierce-eyed Fulani from the home district, there were solid, heavy-featured Hausa from Zamfara and the Katsina border; there were grim-visaged Gobirawa from the northern marches, many of them still sullenly conscious that a century and a half ago they were the overlords; there were black-gowned bowmen from Argungu, descendants of the men who, for more than a hundred years, had kept the Fulani cavalry at bay; and behind

them the insolently arrogant Kebbi horse, always self-conscious under the eyes of their old enemies. Lastly, there were bands of cheerful, round-faced pagans from the Niger valley and the south-eastern fringes of the province.

It had been a superb and deeply moving piece of pageantry. These serried ranks of horse and foot could have marched straight out of the Middle Ages, for it was warriors mounted, attired, and armed like these that had over the centuries rampaged across the plains of the Western Sudan. But by tomorrow the warriors of today would wake up to a modern world. Some, like their forefathers, would return to their farms and fish traps, their trading booths and dye pits, their smithies and their looms. But scores of others would be answering telephones, typing letters, repairing motorcars, and laying water mains.

As the last files of horsemen passed on their way and the drumming and the trumpeting grew fainter, the Governor made ready to move to the microphone to address the assemblage of chiefs and notables now gathered in the pavilion. But before he rose, he turned to me and said, "One day, before long, I think and hope, the King will see this."

Eight years had still to pass before his prophecy was to come true. But it was to be the Princess Elizabeth, by that time three years Queen, before whom, at Kaduna, a great army of horse and foot from every province in the North would move in a procession that was almost a precise replica of the spectacle that we had just witnessed, though on a vaster, more majestic scale.

II

The next few months were spent largely on tour. I was anxious to see how the many development projects started in the time of my predecessor were progressing and to get a clear idea as to where our main effort should be made in the future. I had always been convinced that our first duty lay with the illiterate peasantry of the countryside who formed the mass of the population. Unless we could drastically change their present circumstances and outlook we should be delivering them, hog-tied by ignorance and poverty, into the hands of whoever cared to exploit them when

the time for self-government arrived. Nothing in what I saw and heard in Sokoto caused me to change my view.

Then came an unexpected stroke of good fortune. Andrew Cohen would shortly be visiting Nigeria, and two nights of his tour would be spent in Sokoto. Here was a Heaven-sent opportunity. The one full day of the visit could be devoted to a two-hundred-mile expedition by road, taking in Argungu and Birnin Kebbi. In no other way would he, still head of the African Department of the Colonial Office, be able to see how nine-tenths of the two and a half million people of the province lived and what the fundamental problems were that we were now facing. Cohen was scarcely the man who would be content with the undemanding program that was normally arranged for visiting V.I.P.'s, and I had no qualms in planning a trip that would be tough by any standards. When he arrived, we found he was much as I had known him at Cambridge, and as he paced restlessly up and down in the gathering dusk, listening to the arrangements for the morning, we might well, had it not been for the heat, be back again at Queen's.

That afternoon I had taken him down to the rice fields on the Sokoto river plain, the *fadama* (an alluvial plain, applied to any perennially fertile area) where "Aussie" Olivier, our Agricultural Officer, had been experimenting with a tractor to prove his theory that mechanized rice-farming was practicable in the *fadama* despite the heaviness of the soil. As matters now stood, each year, once the floods subsided, the rich, alluvial soil of the *fadama* became iron hard in the sun, and before the next season's planting the farmers had to chip and hack their way, with their primitive hoes, through the crust thus formed to the softer soil below. In such a manner only a meager acreage could be worked. But if tractors could be used instead of hoes, a new era of prosperity could lie ahead, for this *fadama* extended for over two hundred miles, and a surplus of food could bring badly needed wealth into an area where cotton and groundnuts, the main cash crop, would not grow.

As we drove along early next morning it was easy to see that the greatest menace to the countryside was the creeping evil of erosion. But it had not always been so, for there were old men in

Argungu who could remember the dense thickets of thorn scrub and woodland that screened the town walls during the Fulani wars. Today there was not so much as a bush. In those times, too, elephant had been common and even giraffe, but half a century of the Pax Britannica and the farming habits of an expanding population had driven the game to distant parts.

It was these farming habits that had always been the despair of successive generations of Forestry Officers. The peasantry, in their feckless way, felled and burned and farmed wherever it suited them, until the soil was worked out, and then moved on to fell and burn and farm again. Seven thousand square miles of the province had been taken over as Forest Reserves, and Laurie Wedderburn, the provincial Forestry Officer, had his eye on five hundred more, to the indignation of the local people who declined to be convinced that before many years the desert would be at their doorstep unless the headwaters of their streams and rivers were protected by trees.

Yet all around them, as we ourselves could see, was the evidence—the patches of bare tableland, the innumerable gulleys and crevasses, the naked hillsides scarred and seamed by the rushing waters of past rainy seasons. There were even places where whole villages were threatened.

There was much that we were already doing, instances of which we would see this day, to teach the people to protect themselves and their soil. There were check dams in the gulleys, "milk wood" hedges that would strike in any soil, clumps of coarse grass along farm boundaries, contour-ridging, tree-planting, all of which would help to deflect the force of the flooding rainwater in the rains and protect the young corn at the end of the dry season from wind-blown dust. But far more would be needed in the future.

One of our more successful experiments lay on the border between Argungu and Gwandu at the little village of Gwotomo. Here an embryo lake, inland from the marsh, was being extended by a dam which would open up many acres for irrigated farms and market gardens. Irrigation was carried out, up and down the marsh, by the laborious methods of the past, a goatskin bucket on

the end of a weighted beam. Now we intended to introduce wind-mill pumps, two of which were already on order.

Finally, there were villages where the old crumbling and polluted wells had been replaced by cement-lined structures with protected tops and where broad avenues of freshly planted shade trees had already reduced the danger of fire and disease. And there were fruit tree nurseries for citrus fruit and guavas and mangos from which young trees would be distributed each year to any who wanted them, an incalculable boon in this arid, vitamin-starved land.

On our return journey, late in the afternoon, I had arranged for a visit to the little district headquarters town of Yabo to meet the district council. Village councils had always been a recognized feature of the rural scene in the North. District councils were a British innovation. They had existed in most advanced emirates for some years, but they were there merely to advise and had no powers. Now we wished to put more life into them by encouraging the appointment of younger men with a more critical outlook. We would also give them public funds to control. In this way they would become an effective link in the long chain between the Sultan and the humble peasant and an improvement, we hoped, on the direct control by the District Head and his staff that existed at present.

As we seated ourselves in the open space before the District Head's house and exchanged greetings with him and his council I could not pretend to myself, or to Cohen, that we were facing anything more significant than a gathering of courtly old men, a little bewildered at being summoned from their sleepy villages to advance opinions on matters that they would willingly, as in the past, have left to their District Head and his subordinates. But as we conversed it appeared that there was life among the embers after all. There was criticism as well as comment, whereas a year or so ago the response would certainly have been, "May Allah prolong your life. All is well. Nothing troubles us." Perhaps, despite all, we were at last witnessing the birth pangs of local public opinion.

Throughout the day Cohen had mostly listened, but periodically a flood of ideas would tumble from him to be followed

by one of those periods of deep, impenetrable silence for which he was well known. And it was at the end of one of these silences that, apropos of nothing that had been said before, he suddenly observed, "Of course, this country is far too vast and diverse to be administered from Lagos. Each of the three regions should be responsible for its own affairs under its own Governor. The man at Lagos should be a Governor General and the regional posts should rank as Governorships." A further period of silence followed, during which time I reluctantly banished from my mind an entrancing vision of a North tackling its own problems in its own way, untrammelled by the leading strings of Lagos, in order to address myself to the task of bringing my companion's mind back to the business in hand, the future well-being of the impoverished peasantry of Sokoto.

III

Long before Andrew Cohen's visit we had begun to get to grips with the task that we had set ourselves. Almost everything had been against us—a crippling lack of equipment and material, an even greater lack of qualified staff, no more than thirty, at the time, in the entire province and only two engineers among them, our remoteness from all sources of supply and specialist advice, and, lastly, the backwardness and neglect that faced us from one end of the province to the other.

But we had two great assets, the mounting enthusiasm of every single member of our new Development Committee and an outstandingly able and devoted provincial staff. And of that staff, largely because they were nearest to me and bore a greater weight of responsibility than others, I owed most to my D.O.'s and, particularly, to Bernard Hadow, Bruce Greatbatch, and Hector Wrench. These three, all of them young for the burden that they carried, never seemed to tire. They kept long hours for seven days a week, and during weekends it became a routine for me to prise them out of their offices at mid-day on Sundays for a beer at the club or at the Residency.

Our immediate problem had been to get our share of the materials and equipment, at last reaching Nigeria in quantity,

intact if possible, from Lagos to Sokoto. There were so many things that could go wrong. Once the first hazard, the Lagos docks, had been surmounted and when what had not been broached, broken, or mislaid there or on the high seas or in Liverpool had been accepted by the railway, the seven-hundred-mile haul to Gusau lay ahead.

It was at Lagos itself and between Lagos and Gusau that we had the most trouble. Even when consignments had been successfully checked out of Lagos they could disappear for weeks, and when they finally arrived we often found that some essential item had gone astray and work again came to a standstill.

In desperation I appealed directly to Denys Woodward, the General Manager, a cheerful and imperturbable character whom I had known well since Minna days. He was the sort of man to whom I felt I could safely make a suggestion that many heads of departments might have considered outrageous. At worst he would merely puff quietly at his pipe and say, "Sorry, but I am afraid that I cannot do it that way." My proposal was that whenever urgently needed consignments for Sokoto became overdue I should telegraph him, personally, such details as I knew. Would he then, personally, set in motion a harrying operation designed to chase the missing goods into the open? Agreement was ungrudging and immediate and the effect dramatic. Minor railway officials soon began to discover that they would save themselves a great deal of trouble if they kept goods consigned for Sokoto on the move, and the flow of urgent telegrams between Denys and myself soon died away to nothingness.

The example quoted was one instance, though a vital instance, of the personal help we now began to receive from a new generation of top people in Lagos, once they realized our difficulties, in particular, from Clem Pleass, the Development Secretary, Rex Taylor, the Director of Public Works, and Davidson, the Director of Education, a shrewd, kindhearted Scot in whose spacious and comfortable house on the lagoon we stayed when visiting Lagos. For the people at the top we had no hard feelings, only gratitude. It was in the lower tiers of the vast, unwieldy governmental machine that the shuffling and the shelving took place.

One of our first problems was housing. Only one new per-

manent house for European staff had been built in Sokoto during the past twenty-four years, and all that awaited the newly appointed staff and their wives—who, we were assured, would soon be with us—were a few bat-infested mud and thatch houses. Unless something better could be provided, these new arrivals would justifiably feel that they had been lured to Northern Nigeria under false pretenses, and they would not be likely to remain in the country for long. In the past an older generation had accepted such accommodation and had made the best of it because, then, there was no alternative. Today government had no such excuse.

But before we embarked upon the battle of the houses, we had already fought, and won, the battle of the flies. Sokoto swarmed with them, particularly in the hot season. This meant that dysentery among Europeans, who had no resistance, was widespread, far more widespread, in fact, than malaria. We had asked for funds to screen kitchens, pantries, and living rooms with flyproof wire gauze, but to no avail. Then one day Frank Budden, the M.O., asked me if I would support him in a plea for money and equipment from Kaduna to experiment with the new insecticide DDT. Successful trials by spraying had apparently been carried out in other countries.

The response to our joint appeal was not encouraging. "It was an established fact," we were coldly told, "that the only way to control flies was by controlling the cattle and horses in whose droppings the flies bred. No cattle and horses in or near the Station, no flies. And, in any case, no funds or equipment." This was far from being the first time that I had heard this argument. But I, and others, knew from experience that livestock control could be little more than a palliative, for in areas of intense heat and infrequent rain flies will breed in myriads in any form of decomposing matter.

Dysentery was far too serious a health problem in Sokoto, especially with a lot of inexperienced Europeans on their way, for us to accept this decision, and we decided to go ahead. Frank Budden produced the DDT, the PWD produced a couple of antiquated spraying machines, and I "found" the money to buy the kerosene from some government vote that seemed to meet the

case, though I doubt very much if the audit would have agreed with me if they had spotted it. Similar "irregular" action was taken over flyproofing for kitchens.

We decided, with my wife's agreement, to make the Residency the "Guinea pig" for our first experiment. And so, under the horrified gaze of our domestic staff, our walls, ceilings, and furniture were subjected to a drenching of kerosene (paraffin) impregnated with DDT from our borrowed sprays which spurted liquid from every joint as well as from the nozzle. The house literally ran with rivers of kerosene and stank for three days. But the effect was miraculous and other houses were treated in turn. For this year, at least, the fly menace was mastered, and a repeat dose the following year was equally effective.

Our fly problem was not our only point of disagreement with medical headquarters at Kaduna. There was the affair of the Nurses' Training School. For the two million inhabitants of the province we had only two hospitals, one with 150 beds at Sokoto and one with 60 beds at Gusau. We planned first to double the accommodation at Sokoto and Gusau and to build a new hospital at Birnin Kebbi. But we had not even been given enough nurses for our existing accommodation, and Kaduna claimed that no more could be spared. When we asked for places for trainee nurses we were told that a knowledge of English and certain minimum educational standards were required. But the output of our middle school was far too small already, and so, quite simply, we had not got the boys and girls.

But Frank Budden was not to be defeated. After talking things over with Alex Cooper, as devoted a Nursing Sister as ever served Sokoto, and with the NA, he came up with a novel scheme. Could we not select the pick of the output of the elementary schools, teach them simple English, and then put them through a course of training which he and Miss Cooper would supervise? If the NA would finance and run the scheme, we would be free from departmental control.

This sounded admirable, and I took the matter up with the Sultan and council who were at once enthusiastic. And so the Budden-Cooper School came into being with an entry of forty boys and girls, an entry that was to be repeated annually. Once

they had learned sufficient English, they would be trained as nurses, sanitary inspectors, dispensary attendants, and dressers.

But our greatest need of all, and here there could be no short cuts, was education. Ours, owing to lack of funds and to its innate conservatism, was probably the most backward province in this respect in the North. Only three children in every two hundred of school age were attending school, and nine out of ten of these left after they had completed their four years at an elementary school which gave them little more than the three *R*'s together with some simple history and geography. The teaching of English did not at that time begin until entry into our one middle school, which turned out a mere forty boys a year and which would take its pupils to the approximate equivalent of form three or four in English grammar schools. Of these forty boys only two or three went on to Katsina College, the only institution of its kind in the entire region. Here they would attain the rough equivalent of O level.

Yet the total accumulated output of Katsina College, which had moved to Kaduna in 1938 and was about to move again to Zaria under a new name, was less than three hundred, the majority of whom had, mercifully, taken up teaching as a profession. It was among that remarkable three hundred that the North was to find its leaders of tomorrow. To those who conceived the idea of the old Katsina College and to those who taught there the region owed a debt that its leaders would be swift to acknowledge when the time came.

With an educational structure so narrowly based and so limited in scope the prospects for the future would have been indeed bleak were it not for the fact that the twin enemies to progress of earlier years, apathy and lack of funds, were no longer in the field. For the first time the will to learn was there and the money was there. The challenge could be accepted and was already being accepted.

IV

It was at this point, when all seemed to be going well, that a crisis arose in the inner circles of the Sultan's administration. ✓

While the aging Waziri and the old councilors maintained an easy, friendly relationship with their ruler, the Sardauna, leader of the younger generation and the most able member of the council, stalked alone. In council the normal courtesies were observed, for such was the Sokoto tradition. But the growing tension underneath the surface was unmistakable.

Everything stemmed from an incident that had taken place when I was still in Minna. There had been a scandal in connection with the cattle tax collection in the districts north of Gusau, and the Sardauna, in whose area these districts lay, had been accused of complicity. Sent for trial to the Sultan's court, he had been convicted and sentenced, and though, on appeal to the Supreme Court, conviction and sentence had been quashed, the matter had neither been forgotten nor forgiven. There were those in Sokoto that made sure that the wound was kept raw.

Perhaps the most sinister social evil that besmirched the everyday life of the ruling classes of the great Muslim emirates of the North in those days was the accepted existence of the professional flatterer and praise-singer. These creatures, who lined their pockets by fawning on the great, spent their unworthy lives slinking furtively from courtyard to courtyard peddling their disreputable wares. And even when their false rumors and lying stories were rejected a little of the poison always stuck.

So it was between the Sultan and Sardauna. I, who enjoyed the friendship of both, had several times tried to bring about a reconciliation, pointing out privately first to one then to the other that, even if they would not believe in each other's good will, surely they could see how dependent they were on each other. Yet, as fast as I could nail one set of lies, the tale-bearers would scurry in by back alleys and spread fresh trouble.

At last, or so it seemed, Providence stepped in, though in a manner that we all would least have wished. One evening, when we were in Lagos, a message came to tell us that the old Waziri had died. Although he had been ailing for some time, his death came as a great shock to us. He had been an outstanding personality, a brilliant administrator, and a great public servant. Not only had he, by virtue of his office, ranked as a First Class Chief, he had also represented Sokoto in the House of Assembly. It was

hard to believe that never again would we see that gnarled nut-cracker face or listen to the wisdom and the wit which the old man always brought to bear in any argument in which he was involved.

I flew back to Sokoto at once. The problem of the seat vacated by the old Waziri in the House of Assembly would need quick thinking and early consultation between the Sultan and myself. I was sure that the Sultan would agree with me that the obvious choice for the House was the Sardauna; but there would be opposition. The final decision would lie with the Provincial Selectors, a body representative of each NA in the province. But they could only choose one of their own number, and therefore Sardauna must at once be made a member in order to qualify for selection. This seemed easy, for the matter lay within the Sultan's personal discretion. But unforeseen difficulties lay ahead.

It so happened that Sardauna was, at that time, engaged on a scheme for the revision of native administration staff conditions of service, a subject in which he was deeply interested, and he was about to leave for Kaduna to attend an important committee meeting. When, therefore, a message came from the Sultan telling him that he had been appointed to the Committee of Selectors and that he must cancel his visit to Kaduna in order to be present at their next meeting, he exploded in wrath. The Sultan could do what he liked with his selectors; he, the Sardauna, would have none of it. So involved had he become with administrative matters that he had plainly overlooked the political implications of his new appointment.

On hearing the Sardauna's reactions the Sultan telephoned me to ask if I would intervene. This would not be easy, for I must not appear to be interfering with the selectors, who in any case would be divided in their views, for the Sardauna was none too popular with the older generation, and one, at least, of their number was known to covet the post. Eventually, I sent Charles Michie, my deputy, to reason with Sardauna. But despite all argument, he still, for a while, remained obdurate. Thus we had the strange spectacle of the future Premier of the North angrily resisting all attempts to launch him on a political career.

A few days later the committee met. Despite opposition by the

traditionalists, the Sultan, supported by the Emir of Gwandu, had his way and Sardauna was chosen. So in January, 1949, this stormy character took his place for the first time in the House that he was destined to dominate for many years to come.

v

By 1949, in addition to the new houses going up fast, we now had a new Residency. The setting, on the site of the old ramshackle Residency, remembered so well from the twenties, was superb. Surrounded on all sides by open woodland, it overlooked the famous Gardens, now a bird watcher's paradise of shady alleyways and open lawns. Almost overhanging one end of the Residency and between it and my little office stood a giant baobab, hollow with age, which plainly should be felled. But local opinion stubbornly resisted any such suggestion. The tree, we were told, had from time immemorial been the home of jinns (*Aljannu*). They must on no account be disturbed. My response to this was that, even if I conceded the jinns, the tree was almost certainly also the home of a pair of spitting cobras, for the Gardens abounded with them and the signs of occupation were there. However, I agreed to spare the tree for the present, and the jinns, out of gratitude, must have protected us, for the snakes never gave any trouble.

Directly across the valley from us lay the club, with its two tennis courts and shady garden. I was having trouble with the committee at the time, owing to the reluctance of one or two prominent "last-ditch" members to admit Africans. This attitude was all the less excusable in that two of the most popular and respected members of Gusau Club were Arthur Vigo, the West Indian Agricultural Officer, and Franklin, the Nigerian Medical Officer. And Gusau and Sokoto had reciprocal membership arrangements.

To turn from politics to economics, though "Sokoto Survey" had now been printed and circulated there was still one serious gap in our knowledge of the life of the province. Little or nothing was known of the volume and pattern of the internal trade of the area. The railway and the commercial firms had given us

broad details of what they knew, as well as details of imports from overseas. But by far the greater part of this traffic was carried by the little men in the transport business and by canoe, by pack donkey and by headload along the waterways and bush tracks that earlier generations had followed long before the British came to Nigeria. What we wished to find out was, in brief, what made the province tick economically and what could be done to strengthen and expand the economy. But no one, it seemed, had ever tackled this subject in Nigeria before. The first step must be to accumulate facts over a twelve-month period. Twenty checkpoints, at least, would be needed, operating night and day. When the matter was put to the NA's they saw the value of the scheme at once and willingly produced funds and staff and new ideas. But we should also require an A.D.O. to supervise the scheme. He would have to be a tough type who would not mind being constantly on the move, sometimes by night, for, unsupervised, our checkpoints would be hotbeds of graft and valueless as sources of information.

The man I chose was a newly joined officer named David Muffett. David was a very large man with an original turn of mind and an inexhaustible fund of energy. He had already achieved prominence by applying a novel technique to the lengthy and exhausting business of supervising the wet season cattle count on which the *jangali* tax was based. By long-established tradition this annual contest between the District Heads, who assessed and collected the tax, helped on occasion by the D.O., and the nomad cattle-owners, who sought to evade it, had acquired many of the characteristics of an international sporting event. There were rules and a ritual. If the District Head ran his quarry to earth, the Fulani paid up with good grace; if the Fulani contrived to spirit away a few hundred head undetected there were no hard words. The odds on the whole were pretty evenly balanced, for to counterbalance the mobility of the mounted NA officials, there were large tracts of uninhabited bush in which cattle could be concealed, and the control of the Fulani over their herds verged on the uncanny. But when David Muffett started chasing cattle across country in his Land Rover, a type of vehicle then barely known in Nigeria, the purists raised their eyebrows. And many

herds crossed over into Niger Province where they felt that they would be accorded more gentlemanly treatment.

David Muffett flung himself into everything he undertook with almost terrifying zeal. One night, hearing pandemonium break out in the club across the valley, I sent a boy to investigate. "It is only Mr. Muffett killing a snake," he said on his return. "But, good heavens," I replied, "what with?" "He is throwing arm chairs at it," came the astonishing reply. Whenever David Muffett was around one felt as though some major convulsion of nature was about to take place, but he was extremely popular with Africans who liked ebullience. He was a natural for the task I had in mind.

VI

In Sokoto Province the political awakening in the North and the interregional rivalries that followed were now beginning to take effect in the larger towns, and trouble was not far distant. Far away to the south Zik's efforts to arouse in his fellow Ibo a sense of pride in their origins and an intention to make their future their own had lit a fire the smoke of which was being observed with growing trepidation in other parts of Nigeria. In speeches to the Ibo State Assembly he had proclaimed that "the martial prowess of the Ibo, at all stages of human history, has enabled them . . . to adapt themselves to the role thus thrust upon them by history, of preserving all that is best and most noble in African culture and tradition." "The Ibo giant," he said, "is waking from his stupor. . . ." "A mighty nation shall rise again in the West of the Sudan . . . [and] the Ibo shall emerge . . . to rewrite the history written by their ancestors. . . . The God of Africa has willed it."²

Heady stuff like this made disturbing reading to Yoruba leaders, however scornfully they might maintain that literacy in Ibo-land was something of an innovation and that these glimpses into the past bore little relation to known facts. Obafemi Awolowo had recently returned to Nigeria and, almost simultaneously,

2. Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Zik: A Selection from the Speeches of Nnamdi Azikiwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 243, 246, 249.

flourishing branches of his Egbe Omo Oduduwa took root in Lagos and Ibadan and in other towns.

In the North, on the first attempt to organize the tiny educated minority of the region under the auspices of the Old Boys' Association of Katsina College had failed owing to opposition from the more reactionary chiefs and their following. But, though it had ceased to function openly, it had at least enabled the handful of educated Northerners with liberal ideas on social and political matters to maintain contact with each other.

Now, at last, their discussions had borne fruit, and a new movement, named the Northern People's Congress of Today had come into being. One memorable Sunday morning meetings had taken place at Zaria and Kaduna under the chairmanship of a mission-trained Hausa doctor named Dikko and Malam Rafih, a traffic inspector on the Nigerian Railway. These two were almost the only Northerners who held senior posts in government service. The object of both meetings was to form a political party, but as government general orders prohibited the participation of government officials in politics, the organizers had felt that it was wiser to begin with a cultural cover story. This was the reason for the use of the word "Today" in the name chosen. Tomorrow, things would be different. One of the prime movers and the first treasurer was Malam Abubakar Imam.

Ibo politicians and journalists took little notice of the Northern People's Congress, but they at once attacked the Egbe Omo Oduduwa of the Yoruba. Outright war was declared in an editorial in the *Pilot*: "The cry must be one of battle" against the EOO, proclaimed the writer, "at home and abroad, up hill, and down dale, in the streets . . . and in the residence of its advocates. . . . It must be crushed to the earth. . . . There is no going back, until the Fascist organization . . . has been dismembered."³ Apart from newspaper attacks, leaders of the Egbe were physically assaulted, and damage was done to houses and property. The Yoruba, though less aggressive by nature than the Ibo, did not take this lying down and reacted sharply in the columns of their own press and on the political platform. Both parties acquired militant wings under the guise of youth movements. These bodies fur-

3. Awolowo, *Awo*, p. 171.

nished "shock troops" who "kept order" at political meetings, if brutal assaults on the persons of critics and sympathizers with other points of view can be termed keeping "order." Charges and countercharges of the excesses committed by lorry-loads of young cudgel-carrying hooligans began to be a commonplace in the daily press.

In 1949 tension between Ibo and Yoruba spread to Gusau, where there were large communities of both races. The direct trunk telephone line to Sokoto was still not completed, and the quickest and most reliable way of communication was by fast car. We had, therefore, to be very much on our toes, particularly as tribal rioting would provide a perfect excuse for the sturdy rogues from French territory and all over the North, who formed the casual labor force, to begin burning and looting on their own among the warehouses and spirit stores of the business area.

Fortunately we had fair warning. One morning the Sultan telephoned me to say that the District Head had written that trouble was imminent. I, too, the same day received a letter from the head of the Yoruba community asking for protection. Someone, Ibos he was sure, had been marking the houses of prominent Yoruba with a white cross under cover of darkness. Then came an urgent message from one of the firms reporting that their entire stock of machetes had been bought up. David Muffett, whose base was at Gusau, had himself stated that he had recently observed a truculent attitude among some of the younger elements in the Strangers' Ward where the Ibo and the Yoruba lived. We had, in consequence, already been quietly concentrating our outlying Mounted Police patrols near Gusau, and Sardauna, who was responsible, amid many other duties, for the NA Police, had arranged to reinforce the Gusau detachment heavily at short notice.

The time had now come to act, and after dark two lorry-loads of NA Police with long batons and wicker riot shields slipped quietly away down the Gusau road. That night, we were to hear later, there was much drinking and drumming and firing of Dane guns in the Gusau Strangers' Ward, and the Yoruba slept uneasily. Trouble was coming in the morning.

But when morning did at last come, the populace awoke, not

to the shouts and catcalls of rioters, but to the clip-clop of horses' hooves. And as the curious emerged to investigate, they found strong detachments of steel-helmeted police at the principal cross-roads, with mounted patrols slowly moving up and down the two main streets. Watching them from a point of vantage there towered the gigantic figure of David Muffett, an awe-inspiring sight on a horse at any time.

There was to be no rioting that day, or on any future day. This display of strength and mobility by the NA Police was to prove quite enough to damp the enthusiasm of anyone who might have thought that the absence of government police from Gusau would provide an opportunity for unchecked hooliganism.

VII

As the dry season approached and the mosquitoes began to disappear we decided that, this tour, we would have our children out with us for a few months during the cooler weather. Sokoto sunshine by day and nights sleeping out in the open should be better for them than a winter in England with its flu and its fogs. We had largely got rid of the flies, and now that sulfa drugs and penicillin were available to deal with those tropical ailments that had previously made it unwise to bring European children to Nigeria, we should have no great difficulty, provided that we were scrupulously careful over food and water. For many parents the rise in the cost of living in Nigeria as well as in England made the maintenance of two homes an intolerable burden. If, with our experience, we could make a success of family life in Sokoto we would encourage others who might otherwise resist a posting here.

Our experiment succeeded. The youngest child, a girl, was only four months old, but the boys, now four and seven, loved the open air life and our frequent shooting expeditions to the *fadama* where they muddied and bloodied themselves in the manner of all small boys as they retrieved fallen duck and geese.

The elder boy was in the process of changing schools, and in order that his mind should be kept alert during the six months' gap, we engaged a young malam to act as companion and tutor.

Malam Muhammedu was another of those young men whom a minor lapse from grace had temporarily debarred from NA employment, but the Sultan was anxious that we should give him a chance. He proved to be a natural teacher, and very soon pupil and tutor became much attached to one another. It mattered little to us that, arithmetic apart, the daily curriculum tended more toward natural history and the folklore of Hausaland than toward conventional subjects.

Then, without warning, the blow fell. Featherstone, the senior of the Residents and, at that time, Acting Chief Commissioner, would shortly retire. I must move to Kano in the new year to take over his province. I must also take over from him as President of the House of Assembly and inherit his seat on Legislative Council. I wrote at once to ask if I might return to Sokoto after a few months at Kano. There was so much left to do, and I would be very content to finish my service here. My letter remained unanswered!

That December, in Kaduna, the House of Assembly met for the first time in the domed and pillared vastness of the Lugard Hall, its new home. Also for the first time, I sat as President. Fortunately there was an old Sokoto friend there to lessen my ordeal. Umaru Gwandu, onetime schoolteacher and later private secretary to his emir, was now Clerk of the House, with all the intricacies of local parliamentary procedure thoroughly at his fingertips.

It was to be an uneventful meeting, but for me it was to mark a turning point. The Sokoto story, begun as long ago as 1927, was now all but ended. In its final phase it had been, once again, the story of a team, and although it has not been possible to refer to more than a handful of the many who made up that team, this does not mean that they are not remembered. Together we strove to win for the people of a neglected province those things to which they were entitled, and, to a large degree, we succeeded.

Some while ago I listened to a distinguished former member of my service, now Lord Caradon, decrying "parochialism" in young officers. But I am quite convinced myself that it is only by first fighting and winning the battles of remote and underprivileged communities that a D.O. can instil the self-confidence that

helps those communities to see themselves, not in isolation, but as members of a group. In this way wider loyalties are taught—and learned. The emirate becomes one with the province, the province becomes one with the region, the region becomes one with the nation.

A CITY IN FERMENT

1950-1951

I

Toward the end of January, 1950, we moved to Kano. The contrast between the country town atmosphere of Sokoto and this ant heap of a city with its packed streets and bulging warehouses could not have been greater. More than a million people lived within a long day's march of its encircling walls, and though all but a handful of these made their living from the land, all of them did frequent business with the merchants and the stallholders of the city and its suburbs.

At the time of our arrival the produce-buying season was reaching its peak, and already the tall pyramids of tightly packed sacks of groundnuts were taking shape as purchases outstripped the capacity of the single-track railway to the ports. All day long and throughout much of the night convoys of ramshackle lorries, piled high with produce and passengers, clattered and thundered along the main trunk road from the east which skirted the Residency grounds. And during the hours of daylight, along the sandy verges that bordered the macadam, trains of slowly pacing camels gazed with insolent hauteur at the donkeys that plodded despondently past them singly or in groups.

Yet this was only one of the many main roads that led to the city and its suburbs, along whose streets sweating gangs of laborers, their skins coated with fine dust, pushed and hauled rubber-tired trucks piled with bales and crates of merchandise. To remind us of the outer world, throughout the twenty-four hours we could hear the noise of circling aircraft. For Kano, with its international airport, lay at one of the main air crossroads of Africa. From here, almost any day, it was possible to fly to the great cities of Europe and North Africa, to Khartum, to the Congo, to Rho-

desia, to South Africa, and to the capitals of more than a dozen territories lying in between.

The Residency, which we were to occupy for the next two years, was unique of its kind. Twin storied and battlemented, with its Moorish arches, its flat terraced roofs, and central tower surmounted by a flagstaff, it could well have been transported bodily from some faraway Saharan outpost. But there was nothing of the Sahara in the four acres of wooded grounds and the avenues of towering African mahoganies that screened it from the world beyond. Here, as the seasons changed, an endless variety of birds, some brilliantly colored, others engagingly grotesque, found temporary sanctuary and afforded us a never ending source of pleasure.

Kano Province, though only a third the size of Sokoto, had a population of more than three million, three-quarters of whom lived in Kano Emirate, the remainder in the three small Emirates of Hadejia, Gumel, and Kazaure that lay to the north. Thanks to its wealth, its good communications, and the opportunities of an influential business community, the province had suffered from few of the handicaps that had for so long frustrated us in Sokoto. The Provincial Development Plan, ambitious in concept, was already well advanced, and I would have been reluctant to make changes had it not been for one defect and for the fact that the Ten Year Plan for Nigeria as a whole was almost due for revision.

The defect that worried me was an excessive emphasis on costly works in Kano city itself at the expense of the rural areas. Industrial expansion and a rising population had, for some time, placed an intolerable burden on the Kano NA water and electricity undertakings and on other public services maintained by the NA. In consequence, large-scale extensions were long overdue. But, as planned, these and other urban projects would benefit less than 10 per cent of the population of the emirate, while absorbing more than a third of the available funds. Sooner or later a neglected peasantry would wake up angrily to the fact that they were being taxed largely for the benefit of a privileged urban minority. And so, for political as well as for moral reasons, the emphasis should be changed more in their favor.

Experience in Sokoto had already shown how the issue of a printed survey could arouse public interest, and I decided to repeat the operation, this time on a more ambitious scale. I had found on my staff a newly joined A.D.O. who had been trained as a commercial artist. John Hindle, a burly, red-headed, Lancastrian, possessed both technical skill and imagination, and once harnessed to a task he would press forward to fulfilment with a single-mindedness that played havoc with mealtimes and the normal routine of his daily life. It was not possible to keep our discovery dark for long, but before Kaduna had stretched out a predatory hand and whisked John off, he had completed a series of brilliantly executed charts, maps, and diagrams that were to enhance beyond measure the impact of "Kano Survey, 1950" from the moment of publication.

In addition to the survey, we also embarked upon an investigation into the economic life of the province. Economics were at this time in everybody's mind. During 1947 and 1948 the responsibility for the marketing of Nigeria's principal agricultural products had been handed over to a number of marketing boards which appointed selected commercial firms as their buying agents. These boards, by paying a fixed price each year which was lower than the world market price, were able to build up reserves from which they could cushion the peasant farmers against the sudden and unpredictable fluctuations in world prices which had bedeviled the export trade in the years before the war. From these reserves, too, they could allocate large sums that could not have been found from normal sources of revenue for the general development of the parent industry. Thus, in 1949, three-quarters of a million pounds had been spent in the North on introducing mechanized cultivation, on artificial fertilizers, and on access roads to undeveloped areas.

The political significance of the new policy was even greater than its economic advantages. A quota of Nigerians was appointed to each board and to its advisory committee and to the marketing company in London that carried out the actual marketing operations. The same policy was applied also in other sectors of Nigeria's industrial framework. One by one the government-run coal fields, the electricity undertakings, the Nigerian Railway,

and the administration of the ports and docks were removed from the control of government departments and handed over to public corporations. Here, too, Nigerians and Britons served side by side under expert chairmanship.

The genius behind this economic revolution was the late Sir Sidney Phillipson, formerly Financial Secretary to the Nigerian government. Small in stature, sandy-haired, and sparsely built, his self-effacing manner gave little outward indication of the inner fires that drove him. The importance of "Sir Sid's" personal share in the peaceful transfer of responsibility over the whole field of the country's economy from British to Nigerian hands cannot be overrated.

Perhaps the most formidable burden carried by the Resident, Kano, of those days was his enforced preoccupation with matters that had nothing to do with the actual administration of his province. Thus, in addition to being President of the Northern House of Assembly, I was also a member of the central legislature, and in March, 1950, within a short time of taking over the province, I found myself summoned to Enugu to attend the four weeks' budget meeting of Legislative Council. This at a time when we were desperately worried at the prospects of a complete breakdown in the Kano water supply.

This visit was to be my first to Enugu. At the time it was widely claimed that to hold the budget meeting of Legislative Council in the three regional capitals and in Lagos in turn was a source of needless expense and inconvenience to all concerned. But, to my mind, Sir Arthur Richards had made a wise decision. In no other way, for instance, could the representatives of North and West, Nigerian and European, have come to know their Eastern brethren. By meeting them socially on their own ground and as their guests we could better appreciate the environment in which they lived and the problems with which they were faced, so different from those of the North.

At the time we met, Enugu still lay under the shadow of the tragic riots that had taken place four months previously, in the course of which the police had opened fire, killing a score of miners. A commission of inquiry, which included two African judges and a Labour Member of Parliament, had found itself

unable to indorse the action of the police officer who had given the order to fire. On the other hand, it had, at the same time, sternly condemned the "baneful influence" of the "worthless and dishonest Ojiyi, the Secretary of the Colliery Workers Union," who had deliberately, and deceitfully, led the miners to believe that £800,000 due to them in wages was being wrongfully withheld, thus bringing matters to a head.

Before coming to Enugu I had never before met the Eastern and the Western members personally, nor seen them in action. Now I was to have ample opportunity both in council and in the course of the unceasing round of social entertainment that seemed to be inseparable from such gatherings as these. This entertainment, incidentally, was often wearisome and at times obnoxious to the Northern members. Being orthodox Muslims, they drank neither wine nor spirits. Little wonder that in packed and heated surroundings they found the reek of alcohol repellant.

The Westerners were mostly solid businessmen, pleasant to meet and obviously capable on their own ground. The Easterners, on the other hand, were largely drawn from the professional classes. Like most Ibos and Easterners in general they were extremely outspoken, and the three I best remember—Alvan Ikoku, the educationist, Francis Ibiam, the missionary doctor, later Governor of the Eastern Region, and Charles Onyeama, the lawyer—were men of marked sincerity of purpose and high intellectual caliber. There was, finally, that outstanding politician, Zik, natural orator, shrewd man of business, quick-witted journalist, social charmer—an elusive yet very formidable character.

Officials like myself, who had no other duty than to cast a vote when and where called upon, found these long budget meetings intolerably dull. The budget was a subject on which every unofficial member was expected to speak, and many speeches were prosy and pointless. Yet there were moments of undoubted oratory and an occasional clash of personalities. There was the time, for instance, when Zik declaimed to a slightly startled council, apropos of nothing in particular, that the "tree of liberty" was "watered by the blood of tyrants." But he would not rise to the bait when Foot, the Chief Secretary, now Lord Caradon, a master of dialectics, challenged him to say exactly what he meant.

Back in Kano, I set myself to fill at least some of the gaps in my understanding of what was going on beneath the surface in the city and in the immediately surrounding districts. That something was going on, of possibly sinister import, was very plain. Every groundnut season many millions of pounds were put into circulation in Kano, and wherever there is a concentration of wealth in an otherwise impoverished land there must inevitably be scope for trouble. Such was particularly the case in Kano, the only important center in the North where a definite section of the population was either out of sympathy or in outright opposition to the established regime.

The root causes for dissatisfaction were easy to discern. When in 1807, Alwali, the last Hausa ruler of Kano, was killed in battle by the Fulani, the conquerors entered upon his estate and upon the estates of the old Hausa nobility. All high offices of state and all posts of responsibility passed to the leaders of the four Fulani clans that had led the revolt. All that was left to the native Hausa, their nobility either expelled or exterminated, was their ancestral heritage, trade.

But these attitudes were of the past, and though the older men were content with their commercial pre-eminence and remained loyal to the Emir, who always treated them with courtesy, the younger men, imbued with the explosive ideas that were now world currency, had other thoughts. They resented the plain fact that the Fulani families looked upon them as social inferiors, in no wise suitable for alliance by marriage in the male line and certainly ineligible for any post of importance in the local administration. Here, indeed, was dynamite.

But it was to take me nearly a year to persuade the Emir that there could never be peace and contentment in Kano until he and his house had come to terms with the Hausa merchant community in whose hands rested the real wealth of the city. I contended that, as a first step, he should at once appoint one of the most influential of the Hausa merchants to his council as adviser on commercial matters and that he should try to persuade the leaders of all communities to make common cause for the sake of public peace and the general prosperity, for there was a dangerous spirit abroad.

At last, despite the opposition of the group of elderly reactionaries that haunted the inner courtyards of the palace, the Emir was prevailed upon to appoint one of the most outstanding figures in the Kano business world at that time, Alhassan dan Tata. Openly acknowledged by the principal Hausa traders as their leader, Alhassan had from very humble origins risen to a position of great wealth and influence. No one knew then with any degree of accuracy how much he was worth, for he kept scarcely any records and only used a bank when his transactions, which he normally preferred to retain in his head, permitted of no other course. The principal reason for his success was his honesty. The European firms trusted him implicitly, and on this trust was based his flourishing business in groundnuts and textiles. When he died a few years later he left more than a third of a million pounds, mostly in cash. With his appointment to the council it seemed that at last the age-old gulf had been spanned between Fulani power and privilege and Hausa wealth and commercial influence. But though the older generation were pleased, some of the younger men wanted much more. They wanted, it seemed, to overthrow the regime, if necessary by force.

The key to the problem lay in the hands of the Emir himself. Abdullahi Bayero was already an old man, but he was a wise and experienced ruler. His scholarship was profound. For every situation there was either an apt quotation from Arabic or a proverb from the rich armory of wise and witty sayings for which the Hausa language is famous. He came from a school that viewed, with mounting distaste, the decline in morals and manners of a younger generation that no longer respected its elders and that sought its pleasures in material fields. Yet he would readily support any proposal to open new football and athletic grounds and to form youth clubs as an outlet for the ebullience of those whose present inclination was to participate in gang politics and market brawls.

As he pointed out, in the old days when there was little money young men had to work to feed and clothe themselves. Now that money was easy there was no need to work. It was even difficult to fill the few schools in the city. Only one child of school age in a hundred was under tuition, and later it was even necessary

to close one school through lack of support. A scandalous situation, but the children preferred the pickings of the streets and the markets, and their parents either abetted them from motives of personal greed or, quite simply, found themselves unable to control them. For this situation we, the British, with our "excessively liberal" ideas on the subject of punishment, were largely held to blame by the older generation.

On the Emir's council there were able men with progressive ideas, but in his private life the old man tended to seek solace in the company of the intimates of his youth, few of whom shared his spiritual and personal integrity. Yet out of misguided loyalty and with the stubbornness of old age he would hear no ill of them. Once a week it was his custom to hold public audience with complete informality under a tree outside his palace walls. Here any man or woman with a grievance could appeal to him in person. But what happened afterward when he had retired from public view was another matter. There was, according to report, among his intimates a group of men, court officials and members of his household, who would readily twist or withhold evidence if adequately bribed. There was also secret trafficking in land and in public appointments.

But the Emir refused to accept any suggestion that he was being deceived. Evidence could only have been obtained at the cost of an upheaval that neither the Emir's health nor the public temper would have borne. Paradoxically, so greatly was the old man loved and revered that his people would have tolerated almost anything rather than see him broken in body and spirit. Major reforms would therefore have to await the appointment of a new emir.

Most of the odium for all that was wrong in Kano was borne by the old man's favorite son and his trusted lieutenant, the Chiroma. Yet for all the accusations and rumors, no one ever produced one scrap of evidence that could justify drastic action. Indeed, the more I began to know and understand the inner workings of Kano NA, the more I realized that the Chiroma had by now become the keystone of the whole vast edifice. First impressions did not favor him, for he was autocratic in his manner and his methods and, at times, as arrogant in the face of opposition as

only a powerful Fulani chieftain knew how to be. Yet it was impossible not to admire his high intelligence, his energy, and his single-mindedness. Once his confidence was gained, he could reveal a warmer, more compelling side to his nature.

Apart from being his father's right-hand man he was specifically charged with responsibility for the rural areas of the emirate. He took enormous trouble to insure the success of the new district councils and to accelerate the expanding program of rural projects on which the NA had embarked. Coldly indifferent to his many critics in the city, he was shrewd enough to insure that with the people as a whole his position remained secure.

II

That summer I was on leave and away from the House of Assembly. I thus missed hearing what was to be one of the most momentous and provocative speeches of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's career, a speech that was to have especial significance for me personally, for on my return to Nigeria I was to go to Kaduna for three months to act as Chief Commissioner while Thompsonstone was on leave. It would thus fall to me to ride the storm that Abubaker and his associates had provoked in an angry and rebellious House.

He had launched a vigorous attack on the manner in which the North was administered, and he had demanded a full-scale inquiry into the native administration system. He had begun quietly but ominously.¹ "I wish for no heads to roll in the gutter," he had said, "I do not wish to destroy; I call for reform. We cannot afford to stagnate, we must go forward . . ." Lord Lugard, he went on, had introduced the system of indirect rule fifty years earlier, when the British first occupied the country, but he surely "never intended that the expedient of the hour should remain the unchanging authority of all time." Lord Lugard had stressed the importance of public opinion, but what part did the common people play in the system as it operated today? "The people must be made to realize that they too have a share in their own government." Everyone in authority must understand that "he is a

1. *Northern Region of Nigeria, House of Assembly Debates*, August 19, 1950 (Kaduna: Government Printer, 1950), pp. 91-98.

public servant, fed and clothed by the public" and he must "act accordingly." For a chief to be invested with unchallengeable authority was against the broad principles of Islam. Authority should be invested in Chiefs-in-Council, and the councils themselves should be democratized. The chiefs must not suspect the new educated classes; they must come to terms with them.

He then turned his guns on the British administration. After praising warmly the old-time District Officer—that "Jack of all Trades" who was "always in close contact with the masses . . . who often invented suitable nicknames for him . . . a thing of very rare occurrence nowadays"—he criticized strongly his modern counterpart. "What does the District Officer of today know about the common people? How many friends does he have amongst them? What takes most of his time, his paper work or his tours amongst the people?" But he conceded, readily, that the reason for the contrast between the new and the old lay "not in the quality of the individual but in the ever growing piles of paper with which he is now occupied."

Then, after a blistering attack upon the "twin curses of bribery and corruption that pervade every rank and department" of the native administration, came the peroration: "Sweeping changes will have to be made and doubtless many enemies with them; but the British must risk our curses now in the knowledge that later they will earn our praise . . ."

It had been a courageous and challenging speech. It tore to shreds the veil of complacency that had for too long enshrouded the North. For this, all of us in the upper ranks of the administration, past and present, held some share of blame. But as Abubakar and his friends knew, there were many experienced Administrative Officers in the region who felt that things were moving far too slowly and who shared his views.

Far more, in fact, was being done in the way of reform than Abubakar himself realized. But progress varied from province to province. Equally, while much of what he had said about bribery and corruption was applicable to a number of NA's, it was far from being universal. Nor, for that matter, throughout the years that were to follow, was the mere introduction of more democratic processes to provide in any sense a solution to the problem.

Shortly after these happenings I flew from London to Kano and on to Lagos to join Thompson for the autumn meeting of Legislative Council where we would discuss the policy that I should follow, in the light of Abubakar's demands, when I moved to Kaduna. Thompson, as I had expected, did not agree with Abubakar's proposal that an independent commission drawn largely from outside Nigeria should be appointed to report on the Northern system of administration. It would be far preferable for the North to show that it could put its own house in order. The Governor agreed with this view, provided that Abubakar himself was satisfied.

Abubakar, always reasonable, readily agreed provided that effective action took place without delay. "All that I want," he told me at the conclusion of a long discussion previous to my departure for Kaduna, "is for something to happen and to happen soon. Then I shall be happy." I think that he was a little surprised, almost startled in fact, at the magnitude of the explosion that he had touched off, for he was a modest man and for a relatively unknown country schoolmaster to have shaken the immovable North to its very foundations was no mean achievement.

The first task to be tackled before we could meet Abubakar's demands was the compilation of a detailed report on local government, to give the NA system a modern label, throughout the region. We must know at once exactly how much had been done and was being done to reform and modernize each NA. We could then see where the pressure should be greatest.

This report would be prepared by a two-man team which would carry out a swift six weeks' tour of all the provinces in the region. The leader would be K. P. Maddocks, an S.D.O. who had been in the non-Muslim provinces for much of his service, a fact that in itself was at this point an advantage, for he was not likely to be starry-eyed when touring the emirates. His companion would be Douglas Pott, at that time my principal lieutenant in Kano. Douglas was a South African whose liberal outlook made him particularly suitable.

But we could not afford to remain idle during the time that K. P. and Douglas were carrying out their inquiries. Action as well as information was needed, and a directive went out to every

province requiring Residents to place local government reform at the top of their list of priorities. But I, as a Resident myself, knew well the mere dispatch of a directive was only a beginning. Apart from the Resident himself there were rarely more than one or two experienced Administrative Officers in any one province, and they were already overburdened with that same paper work to which Abubakar had referred. The quality of the post-war entry was very high indeed, but three or four more years of practical experience in the field would be needed before they could fully pull their weight. Unless paper work could be reduced we should make little progress. In the old days, failure to observe meticulously the prescribed office routine could mean a black mark at headquarters. Now, surely, in the face of more urgent matters, routine must go to the wall. But an Acting Chief Commissioner could not proclaim a policy, and I could do little more than state my convictions and preach urgency.

Once the campaign was launched we set out on a series of visits, mostly to parts of the region with which I was not familiar, though a quick trip to Sokoto was included in order to open the new hospital at Birnin Kebbi. These were the best weeks of our temporary stewardship, and we were glad to be back in Kano for Christmas with the prospect of putting into practice what, in recent weeks, I had only been able to preach.

The sense of frustration to which reference has been made earlier in this chapter was by no means confined to educated young men who did not happen to belong to the ruling caste. Many of the younger members of leading families themselves felt thwarted by the excessive conservatism of their elders, and some of them were tending to make common cause with the less responsible elements in the city and to dabble in street corner politics. Of what value, they demanded, was their education if they were to be barred from responsibility and the opportunity of putting their views into practice.

Happily in Douglas Pott, now returned from his travels, I had an able lieutenant whose specialty was local government and whose happiest attribute was his ability to win the friendship of the younger generation of Northerners. He was an enthusiastic

polo player and thus came naturally into contact with the younger school in their leisure hours, and all of them soon learned that he and his wife Mary would make them welcome at their home any time that they might drop in to borrow a book or read the papers and stay to talk. John Purdy and David Lloyd Morgan, the two D.O.'s working in Kano city, were equally sympathetic in their outlook, and between us we built up, at least on paper, a team of potential leaders for whose energies and abilities we tried to find acceptable outlets in preparation for higher things in the future. One of the rebels, a young schoolmaster named Maitama Sule, did everything possible to abandon NA service for free-lance politics, but Douglas and John Purdy dissuaded him. Eight years later he was to become Federal Minister for Mines and Power and one of the most promising Ministers in the federal government.

Although our social life in Kano was more demanding than it had been in Sokoto, there were compensations. The official community, large though it was, amounted to little more than a fraction of the cosmopolitan society of which it formed a part. Kano was the home of "big business," and trading concerns from Britain, France, Greece, India, Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria, and other countries as well all had representatives here. The heads of the more important of these concerns were men of influence and substance in their own right. Our circle of friends, therefore, became much larger than before, and we found ourselves able to live a freer and more varied existence than had been the case in other provinces.

This, in itself, brought benefits, for we found many new friends among the merchants and bankers of Kano to whom I could go for information and advice on problems of currency and commerce, matters concerning which the average Administrative Officer had little experience or knowledge. Men such as these were essentially public spirited in their outlook, they felt that they had a personal stake in Nigeria, and their interests ranged far beyond the immediate advantage of whatever business concern they happened to represent. Perhaps, of the many that we knew well, we owed most to Leslie Evans of G. B. Ollivant and Company and later to Jack Davies of the United Africa Company.

III

In the Britain of 1951 the Northern Region of Nigeria was little but a name. Nigeria, to the interested, was the Nigeria of the South with its eloquent political leaders, its clamant press, its academic links with the United Kingdom, its university graduates, and its students' unions. The North, to the few who were aware of its existence, was still a stagnant backwater, quaintly feudal or incorrigibly archaic according to the viewpoint of the individual. Few in Britain seemed to realize that in the crucible of nationalist politics a new North had been born and that its leaders now faced a challenge so daunting that they needed all the sympathy and encouragement they could get. For public opinion in Britain to refuse that sympathy, either out of ignorance or from political bigotry, seemed to us to be morally wrong. It would also be politically stupid. There were Muslim states and communities in other parts of Africa, Egypt for instance, whose attitude toward all we in Britain stood for was the reverse of friendly. Why make them a present of the good will, now ours, to help them further policies that would not, at this stage, benefit the peoples for whom we were still responsible? Why also risk Nigerian unity by antagonizing the more stable and more administratively experienced half of the country?

Here in Kano, as host and hostess to a never ending flow of visitors of eminence and influence, it seemed that we had both a duty and an opportunity. What finer showpiece than a native administration that, with a mere handful of British officers to help and advise, administered an area twice the size of Yorkshire and Lancashire combined, with a population of more than three million. The fact that at the head of the administration there stood a Muslim emir, surrounded by the pomp and pageantry of a bygone age, was surely irrelevant so long as his people preferred it so. The process of liberalization had already begun, and should they ever demand a change the way would be open. But there has always been an inborn prejudice against Islam in Britain as a whole, dating presumably right back to the Crusades. Yet if even the most prejudiced could see the Northern system in

action surely they would realize how much good was here and how much could be achieved.

Plainly, of course, a stronger infusion of democratic ideas and democratic practices was overdue in Kano and in other emirates. But at least it could be shown that within the limits of our resources we were all doing our best for the common people and that the tempo of advance was rapidly increasing.

The end was obvious, the means were not, for we ourselves could not possibly find the time to take all our visitors on the sort of tour of Kano and the countryside around that I had in mind, and the remainder of the administrative staff were heavily committed seven days a week. I was, therefore, obliged to bring someone in from the districts to take charge of our incoming and outgoing guests at any time of day or night—for such were the implications of air travel—and guide, guard, and divert them during the hours when more urgent duties absorbed me. It would not be easy to find someone with the background and the experience that would equip him to deal, as my personal representative and as a member of the Residency "family," with each crisis as it arose and handle tactfully the more temperamental of our many guests. But I did find him, quite by chance, when touring the border Emirate of Gumel. St. Elmo Nelson was a stocky, fair-haired Australian from a well-known sheep-rearing family. Physically tough, good-humored, and infinitely resourceful, he had just the attributes needed, and as the months passed he was to take a very great load off our shoulders.

But while most of our overseas visitors were interested in what they saw, our hopes of lifting the scales from the eyes of others to whom Africa was a new experience were doomed to disappointment. The attitude of some of our critics frankly shocked me. Whereas, apparently, preoccupation with the welfare of the urban "masses" was in Europe an occupation of unexceptionable merit, in Nigeria, where the masses lived in the countryside and not in the towns, it was often scornfully dubbed "paternalism." "Everything always begins in the big towns," I was told by one well-known newspaper correspondent, "and the rural population must learn to look after itself." "Train the urban intelligentsia to take charge," advised another critic. But it was the

rural population that produced nine-tenths of the wealth of the country, and to neglect their interests would help nobody.

The great majority of our visitors we never saw again. But there were several who were to return for a second or even a series of visits. Among these, and always welcome, were R. S. Hudson and the late Tom Williamson, both of the Colonial Office and with both of whom I was to have frequent dealings in the future. Another welcome guest was David Williams, editor of *West Africa*, already busy building up a knowledge of West African personalities and problems that before long was to become almost unique. Politically, if one can put it that way, we worshipped at different altars, for his views and mine as to what, given a free hand, would be the best form of administration for the North would at that period have been fundamentally different. Nevertheless, we had a great deal in common, and he was always a most stimulating companion. Throughout the remainder of my career our association was to remain close, and it is, to a considerable degree, due to his original encouragement that I persisted with the recorded recollections on which this book is based.

IV

Although the Richards Constitution had only been in operation for four years, major constitutional changes were again imminent. Soon after he assumed office it had become plain to Sir John Macpherson—and equally to Hugh Mackintosh Foot, the newly appointed Chief Secretary—that a further advance toward self-government could not safely be delayed and that, this time, there must be no room for the criticism that public opinion had not been fully consulted. Throughout 1949, therefore, regional conferences had followed provincial conferences until in January, 1950, the representatives of the three regions met in a final general conference at Ibadan.

The main point at issue was whether Nigeria was to have a fully centralized system concentrated in Lagos or whether a federal system, in which the regions would enjoy a considerable measure of autonomy, was preferable. The North and the West, still apprehensive of Ibo domination, were opposed strong-

ly to a centralized system, and a compromise between the two alternatives was ultimately proposed.

As the result of the Enugu shootings, a National Emergency Committee had been formed, with representatives from the main political parties in the South, whose slogan was not self-government in seven years' time, as originally conceived, but "Self-Government Now." With this alarming possibility in mind, the Northern leaders determined that they must have safeguards, chief among which was an allotment of seats in Legislative Council that was based on population, that is, an allotment not less than that of the East and West combined. They also decided to raise a "Defense Fund" to finance a delegation to London which would appeal directly to the British Parliament and people should they find that the safeguards they demanded were denied them.

After much fierce argument the Northern leaders eventually had their way. But by this time £35,000 had been raised, largely in small coin. This sum was used to send Northern schoolboys to complete their education at various English public schools. It so happened that one of these boys, who like most of his fellow pioneers was of quite humble origins, went to Aldenham where I and my brother were educated. Here not only did he become head of my brother's old house, but he was one of the first pair of the team that won the Public Schools Fives Championship in 1959. If only there had been the will and the money to send scores of these young men to British schools and universities several years earlier, the North's problems would, by now, have been considerably lighter.

In March, 1950, the recommendations of the general conference were adopted by Legislative Council, and while the legal draftsmen of the Colonial Office were hammering out a draft constitution along the lines proposed, the regions themselves tackled the complicated problem of electoral regulations and constituency boundaries. This was to be the first occasion on which parliamentary elections had been held in any part of Nigeria outside Lagos and Calabar. On June 29, 1951, the "Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1951" was laid before the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It came into operation, as far as the

electoral provisions were concerned, on the following day. Our first elections were upon us.

During these months of preparation political leaders throughout the country had been preparing themselves and their adherents against the coming struggle for power. Perhaps the most significant event had been the official inauguration, in the Western Region, of a new political party, the Action Group. This party, under the forceful leadership of its originator and architect Obafemi Awolowo, who had by now proved himself to be an administrator of great ability, soon got under way.

In the North the Northern People's Congress, now three years of age, had barely begun its process of transformation from a reformist movement into a fully fledged political party. Unlike the two major political parties in the South it had no newspaper, no friendly banking organization, and no lush sources of revenue. Neither had it any experience in party management. Despite these handicaps and despite a desperate lack of active members, it had almost all that was best in the region behind it. Its aims were to unite and reform and not to destroy and replace, which were the objectives of its only serious rival, the Northern Elements Progressive Union, a radical organization based in Kano.

Finally, there was the Middle Zone League, an untidy complex of non-Muslim communities and tribal unions whose homes were on and around the Jos Plateau athwart the Benue and in various pockets in Adamawa and elsewhere. They were, in brief, the descendants, for the most part, of men and women who had lived much of their lives with their ears cocked to catch the first warning of approaching hooves, the signal that a marauding band of slave-raiders was preparing to strike. The aims of the MZL were clear cut. No domination by the numerically superior Muslim emirates.

The Northern Elements Progressive Union had for some time been, and was to continue to be, so much of a thorn in the side of established authority that its activities merit more than passing reference. Earlier in this chapter I described the resentment caused by the attitude of the ruling Fulani families in Kano toward the descendants of those whom they had dispossessed nearly

a century and a half before. From the moment that this resentment began to find expression, NEPU or some similar organization became inevitable. It also explains the almost hysterical hatred of many of its leaders for those in immediate authority over them and for the system of administration whose representatives these men were.

Among those who sympathized with, and often covertly supported, NEPU in its battle with entrenched privilege there were a number of worthy and respectable citizens of Kano, mostly traders and artisans of Hausa stock. There were also a number of young men of good family who disliked the smug conservatism of the older generation and resented its reluctance to give them the responsibility to which they reckoned their education entitled them.

But the rank and file of the movement and the lesser gang leaders were drawn from the market rabble, from the young unemployables, from men with a grudge against the society whose laws they had broken. Many were semiliterates with criminal records. Possibly it was due to this fact that the movement never attracted to itself men of caliber—with one exception.

This exception was Malam Aminu Kano, the NEPU leader, a former schoolteacher and an associate of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Abubakar Imam, and Makamam Bida. A compelling conversationalist with an original mind and considerable organizing ability, he was possessed of great charm when he elected to exercise it. But from his schooldays onward he had been constantly at odds with authority, a tendency that brought him into early conflict with his emir.

I had hopes, at one point, that I might persuade him that I, and others like me, were equally bent on reforming the NA, though not with fire and sword. Perhaps he might even agree to harnessing his undoubted gifts and fiery energy to the same cause? Looking back, it was as well that I failed. The Northern People's Congress was destined to sweep the polls and to retain political mastery in the North from then on. A total absence of criticism, even uninformed and unreasonable criticism, could be good neither for Ministers nor for their party. Therefore, any opposition would be better than none, and Aminu's leadership had at

least attracted the interest and sympathy of many who would have withdrawn their support had the party fallen irretrievably into the hands of its wild men.

In a "Declaration of Principles" issued a year after the time of which I am now writing, NEPU declared the existence of a "Class struggle between the . . . Native Administration and the talakawa [the masses]" and "the need for the masses themselves to emancipate themselves . . ." by converting the "machinery of government including the armed forces of the nation . . . into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of Bureaucracy and autocratic privilege." This thinly veiled incitement to revolution was not taken overseriously at the time, for the public as a whole would have none of it. But, under other circumstances, it could have been dangerous.

Apart from frequent market rioting our principle trouble with NEPU came from the campaign of non-co-operation that the party launched whenever the NA tried to enforce unpopular measures introduced in the public interest. There were, for instance, the NA forestry regulations which were designed to restrain an improvident peasantry from converting the sparse reserves of timber around Kano into firewood, thus gravely endangering the fertility of their farmlands.

That year the Harmattan had blown more fiercely than usual, the nights had been bitterly cold and the days gray and cheerless. "These are your trees, are they not?" said the young men from NEPU. "Why should you pay for firewood from faraway woodlands? Cut your own wood, and to hell with the NA." An epidemic of tree-logging and tree-felling had followed, some surreptitious, some flagrant, and all assiduously fomented by members of NEPU. But it was not they who suffered. It was their dupes who had to pay the fines. They themselves were astute enough not to get caught.

Then there was the trouble with the butchers. Each year hides and skins to the value of three million pounds were exported from the North to the markets of Europe and America. Their reputation stood high in world esteem, but this reputation, and the high prices that it earned, were the reward of unceasing vigilance on the part of the veterinary staff, and NA veterinary regu-

lations insisted on careful flaying and drying. When skins with knife marks or with dirt and hair adhering and skins that had not been fully dried reached the importers in quantity, prices dropped. The only remedy was more vigilance and more prosecutions. Here NEPU again stepped in. "They are your skins, aren't they? What is all this fuss about a little knife mark? Stand up for yourselves. Don't be pushed around." The butchers were a truculent enough community as it was and needed little encouragement to rebel. And again the sufferers were the common people.

In May, 1951, a disastrous fire broke out in a Syrian-owned cinema in Kano, causing more than 330 young men of Kano to lose their lives. This tragedy, combined with the growing tension in the city that is always at its most unpredictable at the end of the hot season, caused the old Emir deep distress, and he began to show signs that the end was not far away. Any day we might suddenly be faced with the appointment of a successor, and undoubtedly Chiroma's name would be suggested.

I felt that I must speak to the Chiroma about the future. Somehow I must get behind that mask of politeness and find what lay beyond. One day, when he had come to the Residency to speak on some matter, I asked him to stroll with me in the garden, away from curious ears. "Chiroma," I said,

your father is an old man and I pray that he may be spared to us for many years yet. But these things are in the hands of Allah and the time could come, quite soon, when a new emir will be appointed. The choice, as you know, does not lie with me but with the Traditional Selectors. They may well choose you; I think that they will. But of this I am sure. You have many enemies in this city. Therefore, unless you begin now to make yourself more acceptable to the common people who live within its walls, and unless you begin now to show sympathy for their grievances, on the day that you are chosen as emir there will be rioting in the streets, stones will fly and blood will flow and things could happen that could make it impossible for your appointment to be approved.

As I spoke a stony expression swiftly came over the Chiroma's face and his brows knit. For a while there was silence. Then his face cleared and he turned to me with a smile and said, "You are quite right. I will remember what you have said . . . always." Thus began a friendship with this strange aloof man who was one

day to become, for a brief while, one of the most forceful personalities in the country.

With the elections looming ahead we began to study the new constitution. Expressed at its simplest, the old Legislative Council would be replaced by a House of Representatives consisting of six officials, six special members representing special interests such as mining, shipping, etc., and 136 Nigerian representative members, half of whom would come from the North. The government of the country would, from now onward, be the responsibility of a Council of Ministers presided over by the Governor. This Council of Ministers would consist of six officials and twelve Nigerian Ministers, four from each region.

The three regions themselves would be given a considerable measure of autonomy. The post of Chief Commissioner would be abolished and the region would be administered by a Lieutenant Governor. The government of the region would, in the case of the North, be an Executive Council presided over by the Lieutenant Governor. On this council there would be a Civil, a Legal, and a Financial Secretary, two Residents and nine Nigerian Ministers, at least two of whom would be members of the House of Chiefs.

Both the House of Chiefs and the House of Assembly would be considerably enlarged, and the only European members to remain in the latter would be those representing special interests, i.e., commerce and mining. In future the regional legislature would make laws affecting all public services that were directly its concern, examples being education, health, public works, and local government. It would also raise the revenues that would be required to finance those services.

Toward the end of the rainy season, as the rivers began to dry up and the cross-country tracks began to be passable, the long drawn out process of electing the members of the new House of Assembly began. The system adopted had been hammered out by a committee composed of Nigerian members of the old regional legislature earlier in the year. This committee had before it the stark fact that 95 per cent of the Northern electorate, in addition to being illiterate, had little knowledge of and less interest in what went on beyond the limits of their nearest market town,

perhaps ten to twenty miles distant. Therefore, it would have been a travesty of democracy to have required this uninformed and uninterested peasantry to elect an unknown candidate with an unknown policy; for problems of time and distance alone would have insured this. It was therefore agreed that the political education of the people as a whole must be furthered by stages and that, for the time being, the elections should take a form similar to that originally adopted in India and Pakistan, that is, through the medium of electoral colleges.

We already had a well-trying administrative structure starting at village level and moving from the village area to the district, from the district to the division or chiefdom, thence to the province, and finally to the region. It was this structure that the committee decided to use. The people had long been accustomed to choosing a representative, some local worthy whom they knew and trusted, by public acclaim at the village meeting place under a shady tree or in the open space before the Village Head's house. This method would be retained as far as the primary elections were concerned. The successful candidates at the primaries would go forward to a local electoral college which would send forward one of its number to a "county" electoral college and so on until the provincial college to which the few more sophisticated townships, such as Kano Township, would send a representative elected by direct methods. Starting this way it was reckoned that when the time came for the next election people would have become less "parish minded" and more "county minded." At this stage one or more of the intermediate colleges could be dropped.

The electoral college system was attacked by many critics in Britain as being "undemocratic," but in our view as long as the fundamental principles of democracy were observed the trappings could wait. It was therefore comforting to hear more than two years later the views of Apa. B. Pant who had been sent by the Indian government from his post in East Africa to tour Nigeria and the Gold Coast. A charming man with an adroit mind, he and his wife stayed with us for two nights. He had been involved in the early days of self-government in India. "Keep your electoral colleges as long as you can," was his advice. "This was our experience in India."

The Resident of each province was its Chief Electoral Officer, and as twenty of the ninety seats of the new House were, by reason of its population, to be filled from Kano Province, K. P. Maddocks, who was in charge of the province during my absence on annual leave, had a massive and complex administrative problem on his hands. There were to be nearly six thousand primaries electing to 132 intermediate electoral colleges which, in their turn, would elect to twenty-nine electoral areas. These would provide the final electoral college, which by secret ballot would elect the twenty Kano members. And it was at this point, when the date for the provincial college to assemble was approaching, that I, on my return from leave, came into the picture.

I found the NPC campaigning hard in and around Kano itself and in the largest towns where it had established branches in opposition to the local NEPU organization. Briefly, the party stood for regional autonomy and economic and industrial development, a drive for education, the elimination of bribery and corruption, and eventual self-government for Nigeria with Dominion status within the Commonwealth. Its slogans were "The voice of the people to be heard in all the councils of the North" and "One North, one people, irrespective of religion, rank, or tribe." A somewhat more sober and mature declaration than that of its opponents which I have quoted earlier.

It was the Resident's duty, as Chief Electoral Officer for the province, to supervise the proceedings of the provincial electoral college which would elect the province's representatives to the new House. And so, on the appointed day, I went down early to the hall, prepared for an all-day sitting. Ahead of me were rows and rows of benches nearly all of which were already filled, and as I waited for eight thirty, at which time I should be calling for nominations, I glanced round the hall to see what type of person had found his way into the final electoral college. The front rows were packed with obvious NPC stalwarts, Kano NA officials for the most part, the younger ones looking a little smug, their elders a little embarrassed. This was not the traditional Northern way of doing things. This lengthy and complicated process was to them both distasteful and undignified. Behind them sat a row or more of about a dozen NEPU supporters. At the back of the hall

there was a heterogenous collection of worthies in rather grubby gowns many of whom looked a little dazed at finding themselves involved in this strange white man's rigmarole.

As soon as I called for nominations the NPC supporters sprang smartly up in turn and reeled off their list of party nominees one by one. NEPU then followed, and, finally, a series of unknown names were put forward from the back of the hall on the basis, obviously, of "You nominate me and I will nominate you." At last, in the early afternoon, just before the time for prayer, the list was closed and I retired to the back room for a cold drink and a sandwich lunch while the NA Printing Department struck off the numbered ballot papers. After prayer the college reassembled. Voting would now begin. The ballot box was in a small room behind the main hall, and to this I now withdrew. Each member in turn would enter, mark his list, fold his ballot paper, and put it in the box. The younger men got through the business quickly, and all I had to do was to sit back and meditate. But when it came to the turn of the aged worthies from the outer districts, not one of whom could read or write, the trouble began. "May Allah prolong your life" said the first. "A and B and C and D on this list," which I had to read aloud to each one, "are known to me. They are good men, and if you will show me where to make my mark, I will choose them. But, as for these others," with a confiding smile, "who would you suggest?" "I have already told you," I replied patiently, "that I cannot advise you. You must decide yourself." "I heard what you said," came the reply, "but," disarmingly, "nobody can hear us here. In the name of Allah tell me who to choose." This difficulty I solved by reading through the list of candidates, asking after each one "Yes or No?" until his tale was complete. Another one said, "Who did Malam X vote for? I would like to choose the same as he did." One rheumy-eyed graybeard came to the point at once. "Wallahi!" he said, "I told them that I did not wish to come here. There was no such foolishness in the old days. It is the young men, always wanting something new. I cannot see the paper. In the name of Allah do it for me."

In the case of more than a dozen, I had to hold and guide the pen hand, after cajoling from them the names of those for whom

they wished to vote. Several contrived to lighten proceedings by volunteering illuminating, and occasionally scurrilous, comments on the habits and integrity of candidates of whom they did not approve. In general, however, when faced with the necessity for making a decision, the choice was shrewdly made.

It was dark before voting was completed, and with darkness came a cyclist with more sandwiches from my wife and a thermos flask. The counting took nearly two hours, and it was not till after eight that the twelve-hour marathon was over and I could announce the upshot, a sweeping victory for the NPC.

This result accorded with the general pattern in the other provinces, most of which had already voted. All over the region, even in areas where Muslims were in a minority, the NPC, or organizations that supported the NPC, had either swept the board or found a secure footing. Later, there were claims that thanks to the electoral college system the results gave a completely false picture of the extent of the support that NEPU commanded. But, out of interest, I had checked the Kano Province primaries to find that, even in this province where they were strongest, NEPU had only won 10 per cent of the primary elections.

At the time, as I drove homeward, I had reflected that, taking the elections as a whole, the most heartening result was the high proportion of able and responsible men who had been chosen in nearly all of the twelve provinces. Still, it was a pity that Aminu Kano had not got through. The new House would have all the solidity it needed. A firebrand or two would do no harm, and success might have taken some of the bitterness out of Aminu's system. The region needed all the able men it could muster, and of Aminu's ability there could be no question.

Now that the elections were over, it became possible to concentrate on the complete change in our lives that now awaited us, for Eric Thompstone was about to retire on pension, and a few weeks earlier I had been offered the Lieutenant Governorship. Great though the honor and considerable though the financial inducements, I had, for some while, been far from certain what my response should be. I was already in my fifty-third year, with over thirty strenuous and often anxious years of service behind me. I had no illusions as to the magnitude of the task that

lay ahead. Would I be able to last the course? Again, on the purely personal side, would my wife and I, with our hearts in the provinces, ever settle down happily in the artificial atmosphere of Kaduna? Our three months in Government Lodge in 1950 had certainly not sharpened our appetites for the isolation and the unending round of ceremonies and official entertainment that life there would involve.

Yet, overshadowing all our misgivings, there confronted us the grim, unpalatable fact that Northern Nigeria now faced a challenge which not only involved the survival of its cherished way of life but which even threatened its continued existence as a political entity. People like myself who had spent most of their working lives among its peoples were needed, and I felt I had to stay.

But from the beginning it would not be easy. I should be taking over from a man who had, for long, been very much of a landmark in the North. With his massive figure, his unhurried movements, and his cheerful, imperturbable manner, Thompson had always, throughout his five years at Kaduna, radiated an aura of stability.

His special interests had been the great trunk roads that were slowly snaking across the face of the region, the dogged search for subartesian water far below the arid Bornu plain, the constant battle to maintain, in the face of modernistic tendencies, styles of architecture that would not clash horribly with the Sudanic background of the North, and the planting of trees in the barren wastes of the frontier provinces. Traveling with him by car was something of an undertaking, for however long the journey and however hot the day, whenever we came to a new bridge I would find myself expected to scramble down into the river bed to study the abutments or some other constructional feature. New buildings and new well sites all exercised the same fascination for him. His final responsibility had been the unspectacular yet highly complicated groundwork which had been necessary before the new constitution could be launched. He had been sworn in as Lieutenant Governor on December 21. His task completed, he would now retire.

On January 5, 1952, my birthday as it so happened, the first

meeting of the new House of Assembly took place. As I took my seat as President for the last time and glanced around the packed benches it seemed as though the most able and the most experienced among the educated leaders of the region were assembled before me. The electorate, devious and prolonged though the procedure had been, had done its work well.

Our first urgent business was the election of forty members to the Joint Council of both Houses to which the House of Chiefs had already appointed an equivalent number of its own members. The function of the Joint Council was to choose, from both Houses, the sixty-eight members of the House of Representatives and to pass judgment on the Governor's proposals for Northern Central Ministers. To insure wide representation the council was compelled to include in its choice one chief and one elected member from each of the twelve provinces of the region.

When the Joint Council had completed its work we met to put to the vote the Lieutenant Governor's proposals as regards Regional Ministers. Thompstone had already discussed possible alternatives with Sardauna and Abubakar and other prominent members of the NPC. He had also sought their views as to whom he should suggest to the Governor as Northern members of the Council of Ministers. During recent months Sardauna had come to the fore as the unquestioned leader of the North. His administrative ability, combined with his prestige and influence as cousin to the Sultan and great-grandson of Shehu dan Fodio, made such an outcome inevitable.

The Regional Ministers proposed were Sardauna himself, Aliyu Makaman Bida, Bello Kano, and Walin Bornu. No one of them had more than a handful of hostile votes cast against him. Of Sardauna's three associates, Aliyu Makaman Bida—as Malam Aliyu, the former headmaster at Bida—is no stranger to these pages. Of the remainder, Bello Kano, Member for Education of the Emir of Kano's council, was a quietly spoken, dedicated man, whose interests lay more in administration than in politics, and Muhammedu, the Wali of Bornu, was the Legal Member on the Shehu of Bornu's council. Wali was known to the irreverent among the younger members of the administration as the "Arch-deacon of Bornu" because of his exceptional girth and his digni-

fied gait. For my part, I had got to know him well while traveling together by sea on my return from leave two years earlier. The two chiefly members of Executive Council were to be the Sultan himself and the Emir of Zaria. The two Residents would be Rex Niven, who had many years experience of Bornu, and Conrad Williams from Zaria. The Northern Ministers in the central government were Abubakar himself, Ribadu from Adamawa, and Shettima Kashim from Bornu.

THREE

“FINALLY AS PARTNERS”

Chapter 14

THE MINISTERS MOVE IN

1952-1954

I

On January 26, 1952, I flew to Lagos to be sworn in as Lieutenant Governor and to take my place on the Council of Ministers before attending, with my fellow Lieutenant Governors, the "shake-down" meeting of the new House of Representatives. A few days later we dispersed to our respective regions. It was now the turn of the regional governments to get under way.

The day appointed for the ceremonies attendant on the swearing-in of the Northern Executive Council was February 6. Proceedings would open at the Lugard Hall, after which the council would hold its first meeting in Government Lodge, for our council chamber now being built in the grounds nearby was not yet ready for us.

The council would meet at noon, and a few moments before that hour the chiefs and Ministers in their tall turbans and gently rustling robes, together with their British colleagues, filed into the mahogany-paneled room where I awaited them. First came the administration of oaths. Next we would consider matters affecting Ministerial portfolios. But, before we could get down to business, there was an interruption as a white-faced secretary slipped into the room with a sheet of paper which he placed in my hand. Glancing at it I felt myself rising to my feet, and the council, sensing tragedy from my expression, rose after me. On the paper was written "The King died this morning." For a short while we stood in shocked silence. We had taken the oath of allegiance to a Sovereign who was no longer with us.

On the following morning, Wali came to me with a message from his brother Ministers. They wished me to know that, although the members of both Houses had been informed that a

fresh oath of allegiance was not a legal necessity, nevertheless they all insisted on taking a fresh oath to the new Sovereign. They realized that, being for the most part Muslims, they might be expected to show less devotion to a Queen than they had to the King, her father. They wished to remove all possible doubts on this point. They also wished to proclaim their loyalty to the young prince, now heir to the Throne.

When Executive Council got down to work, one of the first things that we had to decide was the future position of the chiefs and their administrations vis-à-vis the Ministers. In the other two regions the Portfolio for Local Government was all important, for in both cases the party machine of the party in power virtually controlled government throughout the greater part of the region. But in the North the reverse was the case. The chiefs and their leading men supported the NPC Ministers. But they had no intention whatsoever of subordinating themselves, as individuals, and their administrations, to direct ministerial control, and, as they were well aware, they had their people behind them. Therefore, any apparent interference by a Minister in the internal affairs of a native administration would cause immediate resentment, not only among the chiefs and their councils but among the Minister's own most influential supporters, all of whom held key positions in their own NA's. It was unanimously decided, therefore, that I, as Lieutenant Governor, must for the time being assume responsibility. This being so, I allocated at his own request the Portfolio for Works to Sardauna, who had been the obvious choice for local government. Works was, at least, a subject which would give ample scope for his energy and enthusiasm, and he soon had the somewhat conservative PWD rocking to its very foundations.

Meanwhile, the House of Assembly met for the budget session. This year our estimated revenue was five and a half million pounds to which the central government would add a further four million for our capital needs. Now at last we could move ahead at speed with our development plans, shortage of professional staff our only bugbear.

With Ministers' minds on the budget, I now had a little time for reflection on future policies and for more personal matters,

such as the new home which was to be ours for nearly six years. Government Lodge lay on the outskirts of Kaduna in fifty acres of parkland at the end of a long avenue of casuarinas and oleanders. Opposite the main entrance was a formal garden, while at the rear there were terraced lawns and avenues of trees. This was the time of the year, at the onset of the hot season, when flowering trees and shrubs leap into full bloom. Already splashes of scarlet and gold, magenta and white stood out in vivid contrast to the prevailing green.

The house itself was spacious, though parts were ill designed for its present purpose. It possessed one feature unique, as far as I know, in tropical houses. This was an extensive cellar, a rabbit warren of a place, known as the "down-below," an instance of the way in which seafaring expressions from the river-trading days of the Royal Niger Company had found their way into the hinterland.

By the time of our occupation, the economies of the war years had reduced the building, and more especially its contents, to a state of extreme shabbiness. Chair springs sagged, curtains and covers were worn, and the flooring was unsafe. Finally, the wiring, the insulation on which was continually being nibbled by the rats that used it as a runway, shorted from time to time so effectively that fans and lights would turn themselves on and off as though controlled by some mysterious agency.

Our Ministers were as conscious of these imperfections as we were ourselves, and they were generous almost to the point of embarrassment in the financial provision that they wished to make. "It is our house, too," was the argument. "We shall, we know, often be here and our Government Lodge must be something of which we shall all be proud."

II

After the House of Assembly had risen, I paid a six-day visit to Bornu Province. Rumors of corruption and oppression were now common currency, and discontent was plainly growing among the educated classes. Something would have to be done soon. A new chief was to be formally installed in the small chieftdom of Biu

in the south of the province, and this duty gave me an excuse to talk things over quietly with Frank Humphreys, the Resident.

While in Maiduguri, the headquarters town, I met W. F. Jeffries of the Education Department, at that time responsible for adult education in the North. Jeffries had recently evolved a new system of teaching which promised speedier and more effective results than had hitherto been attained. This new system made good sense to me. It also fitted in admirably with a project that I myself had in mind.

The objective of the Education Department seemed to be, quite simply, to teach as many people as possible to read and write in the shortest possible time. But, surely, this should only be a beginning. Far wider and more exciting possibilities lay ahead. Here could lie an answer to the most intractable of all our problems. How were we to prepare the illiterate millions of the region to meet the dangers that would lie in their path when British control had been withdrawn?

The adult educationist's slogan of "Each one teach one," was to me, by itself, anathema. Teach him or her what? Merely to absorb the tendentious rubbish that, before the local press improved its standards, was almost all the reading matter that was in circulation at the time? It would be asking for trouble to concentrate on literacy for literacy's sake without providing an ample supply of the sort of reading matter that would be useful as well as entertaining. Surely our most immediate objective must be to arm the newly literate against exploitation. We should teach them their rights and responsibilities as citizens. We should teach them, also, better methods of farming, the dangers to health of flies, dirt, and foul water. And, a very necessary step, how to read price notices in the markets so that they could check the scales when their produce was weighed. All these things and many more could, in some measure, be achieved as an intrinsic part of a new-model campaign which we should now plan and launch.

In Makama, the Minister responsible for education, and in his colleagues, particularly Sardauna, I found enthusiastic supporters of the idea. To them, as politicians, it had both long-term virtues and immediate advantages, for it could also help them to

counter the activities of those of their opponents who wished to overthrow the regime for their own ends.

Another staunch supporter of this *Yaki da Jahilchi*, or "War against Ignorance," as it came to be called, was Abubakar Imam, editor of *Gaskiya*. He had already been conducting a vigorous campaign in the columns of his paper against what he termed the "Three Consuming Evils" that in his view were eroding the everyday life of the people. These evils—in Hausa, *Jahilchi*, *Zalumchi*, and *Lalachi*—were ignorance, corruption, and apathy. "Apathy" is, perhaps, not a good translation, for no single English word can convey the combination of depravity and sloth that *Lalachi* implies.

The responsibility for prosecuting the War against Ignorance was intrusted to an Executive Council committee under the chairmanship of Makama. It would be the committee's duty to plan and prosecute the war imaginatively and relentlessly by all the means that ingenuity could devise. As soon as the campaign got into its full stride, booklets and broadsheets would be issued on matters such as "The Citizen and the Law," "The Police," "Money and Banks," "How Your Tax Money Is Spent," "Your Representative at Kaduna," "Trees and Farms," and "Cotton." These "Discussion Group Notes," which took the form of question and answer, were later printed in editions of up to 150,000 in all the major Northern vernaculars.

The War against Ignorance was perhaps our greatest single undertaking, and though our achievement fell short of our higher hopes, perhaps history will show that our gains were greater than then seemed evident. But, by any token nearly three-quarters of a million people made literate and furnished with the means of making that literacy worthwhile in the space of the next five years was no mean achievement.

But I am now writing of a time when we were at the very beginning of our struggle to prepare for self-government, when there were only a handful of Northerners in the Civil Service, all of them newly entered. At that time, though those around me thought that we would have a far longer period of grace, I personally was convinced that self-government would come in not less

than twelve and certainly not more than fifteen years. In these few years we must somehow contrive the apparatus of a modern state and train enough young Northern Nigerians to man the machine as it came into operation in company with as many British civil servants as could be persuaded to remain after independence. It was a daunting prospect, and had we realized that the sands would run out in eight years, not twelve, we could well have thought the task impossible.

One thing stood out clearly. I could not ask a service, already at full stretch and dangerously short of experienced men and women, to shoulder fresh and unfamiliar burdens without easing the pressure of everyday routine. I knew, as a onetime D.O. and Resident, how much time was taken up by the unending round of routine checks, surveys, and "returns" that government regulations demanded. Until quite recently, a reputation, however unfairly gained, for "inattention to regulations" or for "carelessness" leading to the theft by subordinate staff of government stores, could easily prejudice a young officer's career.

The only answer to this problem must be something in the nature of a civil servants' charter. This took the form of a directive addressed to provinces and regional departments on "Major Policy Objectives." Having listed the objectives, at the head of which came the War against Ignorance and local government reform, the directive went on to give three undertakings. These briefly were: First, no officer would in future be penalized because of shortcomings in his routine work due to concentration on essentials. Second, provided that all reasonable care had been taken, no officer would be made responsible for the cost of stores or cash stolen or embezzled by a subordinate. Third, senior officers would in future, as far as practicable, be freed from petty routine. They would also be provided with skilled secretarial assistance. Incredibly enough, when I was at Kano, I had been the only senior government official outside Kaduna who had a confidential secretary-stenographer, and that only after a spirited struggle on my part.

In May, Mr. Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, came to see us, accompanied by his wife, Lady Moira Lyt-

telton. The main object of his visit was to meet the Northern Ministers to see, for himself, how the new constitution was working and to assess the future prospects for the British members of the Civil Service.

Oliver Lyttelton was a big man in every sense, and our Ministers admired big men. Relations were happy from the start, and there was no ambiguity about their declaration that they would need the services of British professional and administrative officers for thirty years to come. And at the time they were, I am sure, perfectly genuine in their belief. Neither they, nor we, then realized that within less than ten years "independence" and mounting pressure from the less responsible among their followers would bring a change in policy and atmosphere that would make large numbers of experienced British officials regretfully feel that their useful years of service to the people of the North were all but at an end.

III

When I first went to Kaduna the Northern leaders were all Muslims and all came from the large emirates. They had little experience of the peoples who lived on the Jos Plateau and in the areas bordering the Benue and Niger. They did not appreciate how deeply these non-Muslim peoples resented the patronizing attitude adopted toward them by so many of the proud aristocrats of the border provinces. Neither did they then understand the determination of these people never to submit to domination by a Muslim majority. While "One North" looked well enough on an election manifesto, its implications had not yet come home either to Ministers or to their followers.

But I was convinced that if they were wholehearted in their desire to keep the region together, Ministers must quickly agree to the appointment to Executive Council of at least one Minister with Portfolio and one chief who were not Muslims. They had been wise enough five months earlier to ask that three seats on Executive Council should remain unfilled until they had more experience of working the constitution. These seats I would now like to fill with non-Muslims.

But when we discussed the matter one evening at an informal meeting at which the Northern Ministers at the center were also present, I found, to my great surprise, considerable opposition to the idea. I was thought to be exaggerating or prejudiced. Abubakar, for one, contended that this talk of anti-Muslim and anti-Fulani feeling was largely propaganda spread by the more bigoted of the foreign missionaries in the pagan areas. The whole thing was a myth. I had been misled. Bello Kano alone, most tolerant of men, supported me. And so we left matters. I said that I could not accept their attitude as final. I was sure I was right and I would bring the matter up again.

After they had gone, I sat for a while, frustrated and disappointed. I had set my heart on convincing them that they must come to terms with the five million or more inhabitants of the region who were not their coreligionists and that the way to do it was to admit their representatives to a share in the government. Abubakar, of course, had a point as far as certain parts of his own and Adamawa Provinces were concerned. There were in those areas some highly bigoted foreign missionaries who meddled in politics, even when such meddling led to rioting and bloodshed. But this did not affect the main issue. If the region was to have unity the Muslim Ministers must admit non-Muslims to their councils as equals and accord them responsibilities equivalent to their own.

Two hours later, the telephone rang. It was Sardauna. He and his fellow Ministers had been talking things over again. They now thought that, perhaps, I was right. Could he have an appointment in the morning to discuss names and portfolios? Thus, with typical grace, having conceded what they had at first refused, they now lent all their energies to making the venture a success.

The new Ministers were the Chief of Wukari on the Benue, head of the once powerful Jukun tribe, Peter Achimugu from Idah on the Niger, and Yahaya Ilorin, a Northern Yoruba former schoolmaster and the only Muslim of the three. Peter Achimugu was a supervisor of works in Igala NA. The Igala were a largely pagan people, a third of a million strong, who were distantly related to the Jukun. Peter, a devout Christian, was a genial giant of a man who had started life as a steamroller driver. He was slow moving and slow thinking, yet adamant in defense of his prin-

ciples, and we all grew very fond of him. The third new Minister, Yahaya Ilorin, came from a province which had ethnic affiliations with the Western Region whose leaders would greatly have liked to detach it from the North. Now, with these appointments, eight of the twelve provinces were represented either on our Executive Council or on the Council of Ministers in Lagos.

Chapter 15

CHIEFS IN A CHANGING WORLD

1952-1953

I

No aspect of the Northern system of administration came under heavier fire from its critics than the continued existence of what were termed "Sole Native Authorities." A Sole Native Authority, in simple language, was a chief who administered his chieftom by leave of no one outside the British administration. In point of fact, most chiefs worked closely with their councils, but this, as far as the critics were concerned, was irrelevant. For, they argued, legally, the final responsibility for making decisions lay with the chiefs alone.

Now, as the result of a motion introduced by the Sultan himself in the regional legislature, the Sole Native Authorities, a term that embraced all chiefs of any importance, were to be no more, and as soon as the necessary legislation had been passed, all of them, whether the prospect pleased them or not, would be required by law to be guided by their councils. Thus the old autocratic status that they had enjoyed for more than half a century of British rule was at an end.

The next step in this process of "democratization," the acceptance by the chiefs of a Minister of Local Government, was not to be nearly so easy. Indeed, when the matter was debated in the House of Chiefs, the opposition to the idea was stubborn and sometimes bitter. The chiefs had little faith in politicians, and the proposed innovation ran completely counter to their understanding of their status and responsibilities under Islam.

It was not until I gave them a personal assurance, as Lieutenant Governor, that the proposed Minister would not come between them and their people and that he would be concerned with

policy and not with domestic affairs that they would even consider the matter. Further assurance was then required that they would still retain their right of unimpeded access to myself, as the Sovereign's representative in the region, and that matters affecting their appointment and deposition would remain in my hands. Then, and then only, would they agree, consoled partially by the knowledge that I intended to appoint Sardauna, who, after all, was one of them.

When visualizing these events, it must be remembered that at this time and for some time yet to come the chiefs and their councils had the mass of the population solidly behind them. They supported the NPC because it stood for law and order and for progress, but they openly referred to Ministers as their *Wakilai*, or representatives, and thought of them in no other light. They recognized no authority in the land other than that of the Sovereign or her representative.

The deep respect which the mass of the people had, and still have, for their chiefs over wide areas of Africa is something that it is not easy for the peoples of Europe and North America to understand. Such peoples, throughout their past, have never known the sense of security in daily matters that has, in considerable measure, been the happy lot of others in more recent ages. In the case of many pagan peoples, for instance, it has always been a part of their lives that there should be one person who is the living symbol of their corporate existence, who will be their leader in battle, their lawgiver and their trusted intermediary with the Supreme Being in times of peril from pestilence or famine. In the case of orthodox Muslims, of course, the conception of an individual leader is implicit in their religion.

When the time came for me to induce the chiefs to accept drastic changes in their administrations even the more radical of the political leaders consistently emphasized that, only in the last resort, should there be any interference with the persons or personal status of individual traditional leaders. Even in instances where there had been a gross betrayal of trust and the popular will demanded a change, the spiritual significance of the chiefly office must at all times be kept in mind.

The practice was introduced about this time in the Western

Region of conferring the title of "Chief" on specific individuals for distinguished public service. Chief Enahoro and Chief Awoowo are cases in point. The North, on the other hand, had always looked with disfavor on what, to their eyes, was a debasement of the coinage. But there could be special circumstances. For instance, the three-quarters of a million Tiv in the Benue Valley and the quarter of a million Birom of the Jos Plateau had decided in recent years that it would enhance their prestige, and secure for themselves a more effective role in the councils of the great, if they were each to choose an individual to be their chief who would be the living symbol of their tribal unity and their personal representative in the Upper Chamber of the Legislature.

The popular conception in Europe and America of an African chief tended, at that time, to be a man in colorful apparel, holding perpetual court amid a throng of smooth-tongued courtiers. In point of fact, the Northern Nigerian chief of the fifties, though colorful as ever on ceremonial occasions, was in his daily life very much the overworked civil servant, without the civil servant's prospects of eventual retirement. He had to understand the always complex, and frequently vast, machine into which development and progress had converted the relatively simple administrative unit of prewar days. He had, personally, to acquaint himself with every urgent problem that arose in his chiefdom. He had to visit every town of importance and every district once a year if humanly possible. He had, in the majority of cases, to travel long distances four or five times a year to Kaduna or elsewhere to take his place in the legislature or on regional committees. Finally, he had to discharge effectively his local and all-important responsibility for the maintenance of law and order in his chiefdom. To advise and assist him there was, of course, his council. But however effective his council, the ultimate responsibility was still his.

A formidable array of duties, but in my close personal experience the majority of chiefs, whatever their personal failings consistently studied the welfare of their peoples and encouraged the forward progress of their chiefdoms. I know of chiefs who permanently impaired their health, or died prematurely, as the result of unflagging devotion where lesser men would have called a

halt. They had, of course, one great advantage over the political leaders, that of security of office. There was no need for them to court an electorate, and provided that they kept faith with their people, their authority and influence remained unquestioned.

II

But this was 1952, and insistent though Northern leaders were that nothing should be done that would undermine the system of administration, they and I were agreed on one matter. The time had now come for drastic action in two specific administrations, both headed by powerful chiefs, where corruption and misrule had become a public scandal. Indeed, all chiefs must be made to realize that great changes lay ahead and they must adapt themselves to those changes. The two administrations in question were those of Adamawa and Bornu. Such matters were my personal responsibility, and it was to Adamawa that I went first.

As I flew in toward Yola, the provincial capital, I could see below me the River Benue, the "Mother of Waters" of the old inhabitants, winding slowly westward through a maze of sandbanks and marshlands. At this time, in late November, it was so low that it was almost fordable. Yet, only two months earlier, it had been half a mile wide and fifteen feet in depth as the stern-wheelers of the river fleet, their attendant barges, laden with produce, in tow, were beginning to churn their way downstream on their last run of the season.

I had always heard that Adamawa was a lovely land, for it had almost as many devotees as Sokoto, and that evening as I stood on the two-hundred-foot bluff overlooking the river on which the Residency stands, it was easy to understand where its charm could lie. Northward, across the Benue, rose the wooded slopes of the two-thousand-foot Bagale Hill, and beyond, fading into the distance, range after range of rock-strewn hills and granite pinnacles. To the south, more hills stood sentinel, and behind these, away on the horizon, the majestic outline of the Alantika Mountains. Only the stifling climate of the Benue plain marred the general perfection.

Adamawa was the creation of Modibbo (Malam) Adama to

whom Shehu dan Fodio had given a standard and the title of Lamido Fombina, Lord of the South, with a mandate "to spread the True Faith toward the Nile and toward the sea." Modibbo Adama, though a successful leader in war, was a scholar and a theologian by choice, and it is because of his saintly character that he is best remembered.

The Adamawa Fulani, surrounded as they were by primitive pagan tribes, have remained racially far purer than the Fulani conquerors of Hausaland. They have also retained their ancestral language. Among the Fulani of the West, only in Gwandu is the old speech still widely heard. Elsewhere, Hausa has superseded it, except among the nomads. But in Adamawa it is the language of educated people and the lingua franca of the pagan tribes around. In other ways, too, they had not greatly changed during the intervening years. As scholars they were gifted and as administrators they were outstandingly able. But the vast majority of them still looked upon the pagan communities in the emirate with extreme contempt. In their eyes, all pagans were uncouth and noisy and incapable of speaking with one voice. And the tiny mission-educated minority was the worst of the lot. That the pagans together formed more than three-quarters of the population and paid three-quarters of the tax could be disregarded. They were beyond redemption.

But the pagan communities were no longer the hunted hillmen of pre-British days, scrambling toward the shelter of their rock-strewn hilltops at the first sign of a raiding band of Fulani horse. They were now lusty farmers growing wealthier every year and growing, also, increasingly disinclined to submit to the dictates of an administration in which their own tribal leaders held no honored place.

The Adamawa council, at the time of which I am writing, was headed by the Waziri, a wise and upright man. It also included a member of the Council of Ministers, Muhammedu Ribadu, lately Treasurer to the Lamido's administration. The Resident, in those days, was Charles Wreford. Adamawa, remote and inaccessible, was wonderfully fertile, and once the trunk roads now under construction or planned had linked it with the rest of the region, its economic future would be assured. But Charles Wre-

ford's first task was to find a solution to the twin problems of a corrupt and untrustworthy Lamido and a blindly intolerant administration. No one understood better than he the intricacies of Adamawa's problems, and no one could have toiled more devotedly to improve the circumstances of all its peoples.

Before my visit, a committee of investigation had been appointed, at the instance of the regional government, to inquire into the accusations against the Lamido. As a result, charges of direct responsibility for illegal exactions, profligate conduct, and refusal to work with his council had been proven. Under pressure, the Lamido had then signed a solemn undertaking that he would make full retribution of imposts illegally levied, that he would mend his ways in general, and that he would, in future, abide by the advice of his council. Improvement had, however, been short lived and superficial, and the purpose of my visit was to deliver a final warning.

This warning was given in the Residency in the presence of the full council. After detailing the Lamido's shortcomings I said, "Lamido, I am giving you one more chance to mend your ways. Unless you take steps to put yourself right in the eyes of your council and your people they will undoubtedly reject you. And should that happen, do not think, for one moment, that I shall keep you in office with the aid of police bayonets. You will have to go." As I spoke I noticed the expression on the Lamido's face grow shiftier and sulkier. When I finished he again promised to reform, but his promises held no meaning. Some months later, egged on by his favorites, he organized a riotous demonstration against his own council. In his pride and vanity he had persuaded himself that nothing could happen to the descendant of the illustrious Modibbo Adama. He was wrong. The time for forbearance was past, and I informed him by letter through his council that he must now choose between retirement on a modest pension in a neighboring emirate and deposition. He chose retirement.

III

Between my first visit to Adamawa and the final denouement matters had come to a head in neighboring Bornu. Everything in

Bornu was on a massive scale, including crime and corruption, and the news coming out of the province was so serious that action could not be further delayed.

The nature of this action and the circumstances that made it necessary can be best appreciated against the background of Bornu's historic past. According to Arab sources, the ancient Empire of Kanem-Bornu, whose founders were, reputedly, Berber nomads from North Africa, first became powerful in the eleventh century. Soon its influence extended from the Niger to the Nile, and the teachings of Islam began to spread among its peoples. By the close of the thirteenth century, Kanem was the acknowledged mistress of the southern Sahara, and the Mais, as its rulers were called, had established relationships with both Tunis and Egypt. Then followed a period of civil war and pressure from surrounding tribes which culminated in a retreat to Bornu, the country of the Kanuri, west of Lake Chad.

By the fifteenth century the empire was again powerful, and during Tudor times in England the Bornu cavalry and musketeers began to dominate the plains of Hausaland. So matters remained, despite occasional reverses and disasters, until Shehu dan Fodio's Fulani began their war of conquest. By this time the ruling dynasty of Bornu had become corrupt and effete, and the capital fell at the first assault. There was, however, living near Lake Chad, a man of much the same stamp as Shehu dan Fodio himself, Sheikh Muhammed El Amin El Kanemi. El Kanemi, helped by a band of fanatical adherents, drove back the Fulani army and restored Dunama, the Mai, to his capital. But the Fulani had established themselves in western and southern Bornu, and it was a somewhat shrunken empire that El Kanemi restored to its unworthy ruler. With the frontiers quiescent, El Kanemi returned home, but to the Kanuri people, Shehu Laminu, as they commonly called him, was now the real ruler and Mai Dunama little more than a puppet. Thirty years later Shehu Laminu's son, Shehu Omar, executed the ruling Mai and seized power.

Under his inspired rule Bornu prospered, but in the early nineties fresh disasters threatened. Stories began to filter through of the approach of the formidable Rabeh, an adventurer who had served in the Sudan with that notorious slave-dealer, Zubeir Pasha.

When his master's private army was defeated by Egyptian troops Rabeh escaped, taking with him a large force of deserters, five thousand of whom were equipped with firearms. With their aid he had stormed across Africa leaving behind him a trail of smoking ruins and mutilated corpses. With him traveled an ever increasing multitude of slaves laden with plunder.

In 1893 Rabeh invaded Bornu. Within three years he had defeated the Shehu in battle, executed him, and made himself master of the entire country. Four years of butchery and oppression followed. Rabeh was an able administrator, but his methods were merciless. At last, he overreached himself by repeatedly attacking French forces, at that time engaged in occupying the country to the southeast of Chad. In 1900 he was killed and his army scattered.

Under the Anglo-French Convention of 1898 eastern Bornu had been awarded to France in accordance with the international practice of those days, when a convenient river or range of mountains played a decisive part in the delimiting of a frontier, and the feelings of the inhabitants played none. To Britain had been allotted western Bornu and to Germany an area to the south, later to be extended, by agreement, into the French sphere.

On Rabeh's death the French restored the Kanemi dynasty to Dikwa, which the dead tyrant had made his capital. But they demanded an indemnity of eighty thousand Maria Theresa dollars, the local silver currency, in payment for defeating Rabeh. It was while the Shehu was trying to extract the last few thousand dollars from the poverty stricken peasantry that a British column moved into western Bornu to occupy the area allotted to Britain under the convention. Hearing of the Shehu's predicament, the British Commander sent a message offering him recognition as ruler of the British Bornu, which included the greater part of his domains, without any conditions other than the promise of loyalty and just dealing demanded of all newly appointed chiefs. The offer was accepted, but Bornu remained divided, for when the Germans succeeded the French they confirmed the appointment of a rival ruler of the same house with his capital at Dikwa. At the end of the First World War, Dikwa Emirate, under its

own chief, became a part of Bornu Province under mandate from the League of Nations.

The present Shehu of Bornu, Shehu Muhammed El Amin, came to manhood in an age of violence. It had been his father, Shehu Kiari, who after an initial success had been defeated and captured by Rabeh. Respecting a brave man, the victor had offered terms, but Kiari, scornfully rejecting his overtures, had died by the knife, defiant to the end.

By 1952, Muhammed El Amin had exercised a Shehu's authority for thirty-seven years, first in Dikwa, then in Maiduguri. History had taught him that in a world of change the strong alone survived, and he was not prepared to abate one iota of that authority, though his loyalty in all that he felt to be of moment was never for an instant questioned.

I had never, myself, served in Bornu, but I had several friends who had spent many years there between the wars and later. There were also a number of books written by men who knew Bornu in the early years of the British occupation. From these two sources alone, therefore, it was not difficult to form a picture of how things had been in the past. Bornu, indeed, had always been a land apart, particularly in Lugard's day and in the years that followed. British officers who served there had been accustomed to speak, not without pride, of the "Northern Provinces of Nigeria and the Independent Kingdom of Bornu."

Between 1893 and 1902 the sack of Bornu by Rabeh and his son Fad'allah had virtually destroyed the indigenous administration, and when the time for rebuilding came with the British occupation, the NA was for a decade the joint preserve of Hewby, the Resident, and the Shehu, with Hewby very much the senior partner. Thereafter, under Palmer, Lethem, and de Putron, the pendulum swung, perforce, in the other direction, and a genuine central administration was nursed into existence. During this period the prevailing corruption was sternly checked where it most obtruded itself, but not so drastically as to cripple the entire machine. Then came the war and, with the shortage of British staff, increasing opportunities for those who surrounded the Shehu to tighten their grip at the expense of the peasantry and anyone else that they found they could fleece.

Both the land and its people lent themselves to autocratic rule. On the one part there were the well-remembered glories of an imperial past and the ancient traditions of the aristocratic families in whose hands, subject to the Shehu's will, all power was still concentrated. On the other part there was the astonishing capacity of the Kanuri peasantry to endure, with apparent equanimity, the endless exactions of their overlords whether inflicted in their own or in the Shehu's name. They were certainly not the stuff of which revolutionaries are made. Still less had modern ideas about the liberties of the subject or the rights of the people penetrated to these relatively remote parts. The present resentment, now coming to a head, against the group of men who surrounded the Shehu, sprang not from the common people but from the educated classes and from many of the principal officeholders in the districts who felt that the demands upon them for money and yet more money for which they must squeeze their wretched peasantry had now passed the bounds of endurance.

The illegal practices on the fruits of which the Shehu's inner circle of favorites waxed fat were many and various. Every time the Shehu went on tour, for instance, a levy of several hundred pounds was imposed on the District Head of every district visited. Again, nearly every official and employee of the native administration was mulcted of a small percentage of his monthly salary in accordance with a fixed scale of charges held by the Treasurer. The Waziri, the Shehu's principal councilor and the presiding genius of the court cabal, even maintained under his protection, almost openly, a small army of professional thieves and highwaymen. From this gang of criminals he and his close associates lying snug and safe in the shadow of the Shehu's favor derived considerable profit. Organized cattle-thieving on an ever increasing scale was only one of the profitable activities which the Waziri and his privileged band of influential rogues inspired and encouraged.

The Resident at the time, Frank Humphreys, had done all he could to induce the Shehu to rid himself of the rogues who surrounded him. But evidence was hard to find, and, when found, witnesses were easily suborned. A conspiracy of silence frustrated all inquiry. A hamlet outside Maiduguri was openly referred to

as the "Village of the Waziri's Thieves," but unbreakable evidence was there none.

But the Resident's persistence in the face of insult and bitter opposition at last bore fruit. Unlike his predecessors he had the covert support of two members of the Shehu's council who were not dependent on the Shehu for their livelihood. These were Wali Muhammed, Northern Minister for Natural Resources, and Shettima Kashim, Minister for Social Services in the central government. Both were ex-schoolmasters and products of Katsina College, both were fortified by their experience in a wider field than that of provincial Bornu. But they were reluctant to come into the open. At last, encouraged by the knowledge that there were others on the council who would support them, they decided to make a direct appeal to me. I at once took the matter to Executive Council, and it was agreed that I should go to Maiduguri without delay.¹

Both the Wali and Shettima Kashim were, throughout, insistent that their loyalty to the Shehu was unimpaired. What they desired was a thorough purge of the palace and its precincts and a breaking of the stranglehold now exercised by the greedy and unscrupulous group which surrounded him. Above all things, the feared and hated Waziri must go. The Shehu, advised by a reformed council, would then take over control.

It may well be asked how, even fully accepting the need for careful handling in the earlier years, could such things still be in a territory which had been under British administration for so long. The simple truth is that it was not at all easy to bring about major reforms where a regime and a way of life had been established for centuries and where there was no popular demand for change. Individual acts of oppression had been at once remedied whenever they had been brought to light, but where an entire people apparently preferred to hug the chains that its social system cast about it and where alien interference with that system would have been deeply resented, then education alone could

1. In view of what was to be recorded, some years later, on the subject of Bornu affairs in Bello, *My Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), the story of Sardauna's career, it is necessary to make it quite clear that the action described in this chapter took place only after detailed discussion with Sardauna himself and his colleagues and with their full backing.

provide the solvent. And it was the first fruits of our educational policies in the persons of the two Ministers and their associates that furnished the keys to the inner strongholds of reaction in Bornu, for so long barred against us.

A further difficulty was that of language. Kanuri, the Bornu tongue, was difficult to learn, and very few administrative officers could speak it, while the Shehu would never admit to being able to understand, still less speak, Hausa. In consequence, the friendly and intimate association usually built up between Residents and District Officers and the chiefs whom it was their task to advise, was rarely attainable in Bornu, largely because of the inhibiting presence of an interpreter.

Again, it had long been known that the interpreter was far too frightened of his master's royal wrath to convey, literally, any remarks or criticism that he knew the Shehu would find distasteful. Equally, he could not be relied upon to translate with any accuracy the Shehu's own observations in reply. This was not altogether surprising, for the Shehu, though loyal in matters of consequence, would not brook for one moment any interference in things which he held to lie within his private province. Though an old man, he was iron willed. He had served his Sovereign faithfully through two long wars, both of which at one time looked as though they might go against us, and he had known Lugard. He saw no reason, therefore, why a succession of new and, in his eyes, inexperienced Governors should try to teach him, Shehu Mohammed El Amin, how to rule Bornu. His comments, therefore, when baulked or criticized, however politely and however eminent the critic, were of a truly remarkable pungency.

Now for the first time, at the instance of his own people, his authority was to be directly challenged. But for that challenge to be effective it was plain that there must be no misunderstanding, due to interpretation, either on the Shehu's part or mine as to what we should be saying to each other. I therefore decided to depart from precedent and take my own personal interpreter.

There was, by chance, quite close to Kaduna at that time a Bornu-born Forestry Officer named Musa Dagash. Paradoxically, Bornu was fast becoming the principal nursery for Northern Nigeria's top level civil servants of the future. Three of them by indepen-

dence or soon afterward were to become Permanent Secretaries to Ministries, another Commissioner of Police. Two more, Abba and Baba Gana, were destined for high office in London. Musa Dagash was the ideal choice for my purpose. He was a man of ability and moral courage, and his position as a government Forestry Officer provided him with immunity from Bornu political intrigue.

The stage was now set, and on February 12, 1953, after final consultations with Ministers, I flew to Maiduguri. Once the rock-strewn hills of Bauchi were behind us the countryside became flat and featureless, mile after mile of barren thorn scrub alternating with stretches of farmland, with only an occasional village or tiny hamlet to break the monotony. Only when we circled over the outskirts of Maiduguri was there any relief, for the town and more particularly the Government Station had greatly changed since we first knew it in the early war years. At that time it had seemed bare, bleak, and unfriendly, an impression that was heightened by the prevailing Harmattan which had then enveloped it in a shroud of thick gray fog. Now it was all but submerged in a sea of sparkling green as the sunlight danced on the delicate foliage of hundreds of thousands of neem trees. The millionth tree had recently been planted, a memorial to a succession of wartime and postwar Residents whose persistence had made this transformation possible.

As we left the airport we passed some police lorries parked unobtrusively near one of the outlying buildings. They had brought up a large detachment of police which would remain here for the next few days in case of trouble. The pretext had been the relief of the detachment, stationed in the Gwoza Hills, an area 140 miles to the southeast which was populated by an unruly tribe of pagans. The addiction of these pagans to corn beer and their strong dislike of any form of interference in their own affairs were a constant menace to the peace.

The pretext for the movement of the police detachment had served its purpose in Kaduna and throughout the intervening countryside. But here, in Maiduguri there would be few illusions as to the reasons for their presence. There were not meant to be. Rumors, I gathered, were already circulating that some-

thing was afoot, and although the Kanuri peasantry were mild and peaceable, the ruling classes of Bornu and their adherents were of very different metal. Should forthcoming events tempt anyone to risk a coup they now knew that we were prepared.

On my arrival at the Residency, where I would be staying, I had discussions with Frank Humphreys and two senior members of his staff, Tom Letchworth, who was soon to succeed him when ill health compelled premature retirement, and Maurice Bennion. It had been Frank Humphreys' firmness, patience and imperturbability and the confidence reposed in him by Wali and Shetima Kashim which had opened the doors, for the first time, to major reforms in Bornu. To Tom Letchworth fell later the anxious, if less dramatic, task of nursing the province through a long period when scandal upon scandal saw the departure from office of a score or more key native administration officials on charges of peculation and corruption. The third member of the triumvirate, Maurice Bennion, New Zealander and former schoolmaster, had a very wide understanding of local politics and an especial flair for shedding light on unpleasant facts that those who were then in power in Bornu would have far preferred to have kept dark.

That night there was an official reception at the Residency, attended by the Shehu and his council and leading members of the African and European communities. Though many of the guests realized that it was the "eve of battle," the atmosphere was friendly. Indeed, in the weeks and months that followed, once we were all agreed, there was no change whatsoever in this atmosphere, no bitterness, no resentment.

On the following morning, the Shehu and his council came to the Residency. Late the previous night the two Ministers had sent me an urgent letter asking for my insistence on the dismissal of the Waziri as a first preliminary to discussions. The forces favoring reform were still far from confident, and they wanted their most formidable opponent out of the way before they irretrievably committed themselves. I could not, however, agree to this. The reform party must win its own battles with its own arguments. I had promised that I would forbid the Waziri to be pres-

ent at the meeting in the morning and I would take care of the Shehu. I could do no more than that.

Were I, as Lieutenant Governor, to impose reforms by means of my personal authority alone, they would be unending. As soon as I had departed, the forces of reaction would stage a counterattack, and the position of those who had led the revolt would be made impossible. I had also to remember that the fame of Bornu, and of its Shehu, extended far beyond the confines of Bornu Province into the Islamic world beyond, and any news of purely alien and infidel interference with the status of the Shehu that did not have popular demand unmistakably as its source and inspiration would have serious repercussions.

With these thoughts in mind, while the council filed into the room in the Residency that had been prepared for them, I received the Shehu, alone and unaccompanied. As he approached me I could well understand the awe with which he was regarded. Though short in stature he held himself very upright and carried with him the aura of the authority that he had wielded for thirty-seven uninterrupted years. With Musa Dagash interpreting, I began by saying that though it had never been my fortune to serve in Bornu, I was sure that he had heard enough about me to realize that I would never willingly do anything that would run contrary to the tenets of Islam or prove harmful to Bornu and its peoples. Indeed, it was the good name of Bornu and the happiness and welfare of its peoples that were my present concern. Things were happening, almost every day, throughout the emirate that were causing widespread distress. I was sure that the Shehu could not realize how deep was the growing resentment. Crimes were being committed in his name that could not be tolerated, and all that was best in Bornu desired a change.

That change must come and now. There was no other way. It was the Shehu's duty to be advised by all his council, not by a favored few whom their fellows mistrusted. These would have to go. At the moment the members of his council were debating what reforms were needed both in the council itself and in the native administration. When their minds were made up, they would tell him what their demands were. They were as loyal to his person as ever. But he must work with them, and the fleeing

of the peasantry and the organized cattle-thieving and dacoity for which the Waziri and his friends were responsible must stop.

I then left the Shehu and went upstairs. He had said nothing in reply to my warning. There was nothing to be said. As far as I was concerned the decision had been made; the rest lay with the council and this, I think, the Shehu realized.

All now depended on the outcome of the bitter battle now being fought between the two opposed groups in the council in the room below. As, to pass the time while I awaited events, I recorded the story as it unfolded, I could hear the angry voices rise and fall as those who demanded reform and those who defended the old ways came to grips. Decisions were now being made which could at once open a new chapter for Bornu if the new order won the day, as sooner or later it must. But if those who supported reaction survived unscathed there would be serious trouble before many weeks had passed.

At last, after what seemed an interminable time, a door slammed and from my window I saw stalking down the drive, their faces taut with anger, the two councilors who, with the Waziri, were the brains and directing force behind the "palace party." Half an hour later, Wali Muhammed came out and asked to see me. The rest of the council had decided the terms to which they wished the Shehu to agree and the undertakings they wished him to honor. They were drastic, but half measures would have been useless. Thanks to him and to Shettima Kashim, the first part of the battle had been won. It was now time for the Shehu to join them, and as the old man walked slowly toward the door, I felt much sympathy for him. These happenings were no part of his philosophy. But they had to be.

Less than half an hour later Wali Muhammed again came out to send a servant with a message from the "Shehu and council." Would I please join them and hear what had been agreed? As I walked into the long room where the meeting was being held, I could not but be impressed by the scene. The old Shehu, still dignified and still master of himself, if not of the events which were now unfolding around him, sat surrounded by his councilors, the chairs of the banished three alone being vacant. They were almost all big men, heavily gowned and nearly all with the

slightly almond eyes which the leading families of Bornu inherited from far distant ancestors. There was also a certain implacability about them that seemed to proclaim that, while they could be loyal to their friends, they would never forget an injury or forgive an enemy.

I seated myself next to the Shehu and heard the full tale of the concessions to which he had just given his consent. The victory of the reform party was, it seemed, complete. The powerful group headed by the Waziri and the Treasurer which had for so long controlled the affairs of Bornu under the Shehu's protection was to be at once disbanded. Those of its members who were in NA employment would be dismissed from office, the remainder would be compelled to leave Maiduguri. Illegal levies and imposts would be stopped. There would be no more interference with the alkali's courts, and in matters of public concern the Shehu would, in future, consult his council.

Once the news of the Waziri's fall had spread abroad, the protected gangs of thieves and highwaymen scattered and fled, and in Maiduguri itself those who had supported him and his associates lay very low. But this was not to be the end. A short while later a condemned man was brought before Tom Letchworth, as D.O., emirate, to be told that his appeal against his sentence had been dismissed and only the Governor's clemency lay between him and the gallows. The response was a bitter complaint that having, with the help of his relatives, spent so much on bribing the Waziri and the Court Scribe he had the right to expect that the promise that all would be well would be fulfilled. The information was passed to Hallam, the Police Superintendent, who at once got the witnesses in by Land Rover and recorded their story before they could be tampered with. When the case came before the British judge of the Supreme Court the Waziri and others concerned were given prison sentences.

Later still, Frank Humphreys insisted on a further purge when, to quote Tom Letchworth, "some wicked but charming and capable people bit the dust as well as some wicked and far from charming ones who had never given value for money." In the meanwhile Wali Muhammed had been appointed Waziri and had resigned his post as Regional Minister, to my great regret.

Unhappily, three years afterwards he became entangled in local intrigues himself and was compelled to resign. This time, with Tom Letchworth as Resident, a further purge took place, wide-scale embezzlement having come to light. Shettima Kashim became the next Waziri.

The old Shehu himself at no time went back on his undertakings, neither did he show resentment at his enforced descent from the high pinnacle of isolated despotism where he had remained so long. Indeed, he took a new lease of life, for in 1966 he faced and survived the rigors of the Holy Pilgrimage.

Chapter 16

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE CONSTITUTION

1953-1954

I

With the Bornu affair behind us, we began to turn our minds to matters of, as we thought, less dramatic import. The Macpherson Constitution had now run for a full year, and within a few weeks we should all be meeting in Lagos for the budget session. For us in the North, the constitution had worked well, and although we realized that there had been difficulties in the other two regions, particularly in the West, we had been so intent on our own problems that the thought never crossed our minds that within three months a political storm would burst that would both wreck the constitution and touch off an explosion of violence that would threaten the unity of Nigeria.

Our Northern leaders were by instinct and by training administrators first and professional politicians a long way afterward. They knew that to survive the North must progress at almost breakneck speed, and it was for progress, not for power, that they strove throughout those first two years of office. For the present, they accepted the constitution as it stood. It gave them a period of grace during which they could prepare to meet the other regions on more equal terms.

For these two years, the relationship between Ministers and British civil servants on Executive Council was such that we could, in many ways, have described ourselves as a genuinely biracial government. There were, of course, occasional misunderstandings and clashes of temperament, but a consciousness of common purpose persisted throughout. Biracial rule, however, could not last. It was not meant to last. Although Nigeria was a British creation, the declared intention had always been to hand

it over to Nigerians when the time was ripe. We had begun as masters, we became leaders, we were now partners in a partnership that would soon be dissolved.

Our task, during this period and later, was made easier by two factors. In the first place, militant nationalism requires an enemy, and we, the British, were not the "enemy." The "enemy" lay beyond the Niger in the persons of the political leaders and their followers who desired independence for Nigeria before the North was ready, in order, the North was convinced, to dominate the whole. In the second place, there was the essentially civilized approach of the Northern Muslims of those days to human problems. They disliked extravagant behavior and set their faces against anything that tended to destroy the self-respect of the individual or to bring shame upon the community. Thus an important chief whose refusal to move with the times had set him at loggerheads with his people could be induced to go into retirement quietly and without recrimination. Equally, a purge of corrupt officials in a large native administration could be carried out swiftly and effectively without causing more than a ripple on the surface of public confidence. There were no headlines, and there was none of the litigation that would have been inevitable in such circumstances in other parts of Nigeria.

British officers, as a whole, loyally set themselves to make the new constitution work, though there had been, as was to be expected, a handful of older officials who looked upon this reversal of roles between black and white with dismay or distaste. Few of these, however, remained in the country long.

But for both sides there were lessons to learn. Ministers were apt to see a deliberate intention to frustrate or humiliate when, for instance, they were told that accommodation by air or rail or in a rest house demanded at very late notice was not obtainable, or when what they felt was a suitable motorcar was not forthcoming at once when required. Many white officials, too, did not appreciate fast enough that, when good relations with Ministers were involved, government regulations must not be interpreted literally, but generously and imaginatively. And the fact that "Why, I knew Malam X when he was a schoolmaster . . ." was not an excuse for forgetting that he was now a Minister and a

member of the government. These, however, were very minor matters against the background of general good will that existed throughout the region.

In the other two regions, the new constitution was not having so easy a passage. In the East, according to Clem Pleass, who was now Lieutenant Governor, relations in Executive Council between Ministers and officials were, for a period, good. My own Eastern Region colleagues, too, in the Council of Ministers—Nwapa, the festive and ebullient journalist, and Njoku and Arikpo, the two intellectuals—were certainly all men to respect and to like, once initial barriers had been breached.

But it was too much to expect that matters would rest this way. When the 1951 elections were held Dr. Azikiwe, who stood for a Lagos constituency, had intended to lead his party in the central legislature. But Lagos was then a part of the Western Region, and so his path to the center lay by way of the Western House of Assembly; here he was to find himself marooned. Meanwhile, the deputy President of the NCNC, Professor Eyo Ita, leader of the Eastern House, had put forward as Central and Regional Ministers men of moderate views. But the party as a whole was divided both in its policies and loyalties, and by the end of the year the more radical elements had gained control and "expelled" the Central Ministers, who were trying to make the constitution work. They next attacked Professor Eyo Ita and his Ministers and eventually, by weight of numbers, so hampered the business of the House that the Lieutenant Governor was compelled to use his reserve powers to avoid a complete breakdown of government.

The Lieutenant Governor of the Western Region at that time was Hugo Marshall, who had been Administrative Secretary in Lagos at the time when Clem Pleass was Development Secretary. He is described by Mr. Awolowo as being a "highly seasoned and experienced administrator: always cool and unruffled."¹ He was to need all those qualities, and more besides, during these two years, for the Action Group leaders decided, from the very beginning and for very specific reasons, that the constitution was not to their liking.

1. *Awo*, p. 234.

Their first objections turned on the degree of responsibility to be accorded to them as Ministers. When the constitution was being drafted, its authors had been aware of the probable impact of a new and untried system, operated by inexperienced Ministers, on a Civil Service whose upper ranks were filled almost exclusively by British officials. Platform pronouncements by politicians and press comment outside the North had provided ample evidence of hostility in certain quarters toward such officials. Obviously, these men and women, should they find themselves unreasoningly disliked and distrusted by their political masters, would betake themselves elsewhere, either on transfer or retirement. Caution was therefore necessary. A mass exodus now, before a sufficiency of Nigerians were trained to take over, would be crippling in its effect.

The Action Group Ministers, however, having mastered the theory of government to their satisfaction, demanded full Ministerial powers and fully fledged Ministries. If these could not be granted any other way, then the constitution must be amended. All this within six months of its inception. The other two regions would not agree, and the Action Group, on their leaders' admission, decided to wreck the constitution out of hand at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Awolowo apparently assumed that the British officials in the West—being, constitutionally, servants of the Nigerian government—would give no loyalty to the regional government. In any case, the giving and receiving of loyalty is a two-way process. We in the North had known our Ministers for a long time, sitting side by side, working on a common problem, not sitting face to face, an office desk between us, settling some point of difference. Our Ministers, therefore, expected our loyalty as a matter of course and gave theirs in return, and although our ultimate loyalty lay to the Governor, whose decisions we must accept, we fought our Ministers' battles for them according to our consciences until that decision had been reached, one way or the other.

In March we assembled in Lagos for the budget meeting. In the chamber of the new House of Representatives the seating was arranged in the shape of a U with the President's dais at the upper end. Immediately on the President's right were the Ministerial

benches. Beyond them sat the NCNC, and opposite, occupying the entire length of the chamber, the NPC. The Action Group occupied the trough of the U. Our President at that time, and our mentor in parliamentary procedure, was Mr. (later Sir Edward) Fellowes, then Clerk Assistant to the House of Commons.

To the stranger in the public gallery the scene below was proof in miniature of the wide gulf, cultural and temperamental, that separated the Nigeria of the great Northern chiefdoms and the more thrustful, more sophisticated, Nigeria that lay between those chiefdoms and the sea.

The Eastern and Western members, some in European-style dress, others in knee-length gowns and gold-embroidered pillbox hats, were constantly on the attack. No government measure was going to get by unscathed if they could help it. Speaker after speaker rose to criticize or condemn either the measure itself or those floor members who supported it.

Across the floor of the House, the Northern members, in their long white and pastel-colored gowns, listened impassively. They already knew how they would vote and which of them would speak. This was decided daily, before the House sat, by a committee representing all twelve provinces. Everything that they did was disciplined and deliberate. Thus, when the NCNC and the Action Group decided to oppose the army vote, the NPC, seeing no valid cause why they should follow suit, voted with the government, and the "Ayes" had it. After all, four of their number sat as Ministers on the government benches. Why should they embarrass them without good cause? This attitude brought down upon them a barrage of angry and sarcastic references to "yes men," "government stooges," "his master's voice," all of which they accepted with good-humored indifference.

But there was little cause for laughter in what was to follow. On the day before we were due to adjourn, an Action Group member moved that the House should accept as a "primary, political motive the attainment of Self Government in 1956." Such an eventuality within so short a space of time was, to the North, unthinkable, and Sardauna at once moved the substitution of the words "as soon as practicable" for "1956." "Self Government,"

he claimed, "can only be demanded and obtained when its meaning is fully understood by all the mass of the country."²

As was to be disclosed later, this Action Group motion had already caused a crisis in the Council of Ministers. The Northern Ministers would have none of it. The North was not ready. From the Governor's point of view what mattered above all else was the unity of Nigeria, and Nigeria must wait for self-government until all regions demanded it. The proper course, therefore, was surely for the government bench to remain neutral and to refrain from taking part in the debate or from voting. The Eastern Ministers, for their part, were not prepared to try to force the hand of the North. "Nigeria," Njoku was to say later, "could not fly with one wing broken."³ The Action Group Ministers, however, would not give way. One course alone was open to them—resignation.

In the House itself, the three parties had made their plans. The motion, being the last on the order paper for the day, might well not be reached, in which case a breakdown would for a while be averted. But, by agreement, the six earlier motions were not moved by their Action Group and NCNC sponsors, and the crisis was upon us.

The NPC, however, had another card to play. As soon as Sardauna's amendment had been seconded, a Bornu member rose to move that "the House should now adjourn." It had no mandate from the people to debate the date for self-government. The regions should first be consulted.

This move took the Action Group, and the NCNC floor members who supported them, by surprise. Tempers at once rose. Finally, Mr. Awolowo, winding up for the Action Group, made his party's outlook crystal clear. "Our Northern brothers," he said, "should not bother themselves about the . . . conference of the masses. . . . Who are these masses? The generality of the people are not interested in Self Government or in government generally. What they are interested in is their food, shelter and clothing. . . ."⁴

Hearing this I thought to myself, "Who, then, is the better

2. *Nigeria House of Representatives Debates*, March 31, 1953 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1953), p. 992.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 1052.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 997.

democrat, the Fulani aristocrat, raised in the semifeudal atmosphere of a great Muslim emirate, or the Yoruba lawyer with his Western education and his Inner Temple legal training?" To be fair, Mr. Awolowo was speaking on the spur of the moment, and his assessment of the attitude of the "masses" at that time was fairly close to the mark. But an allegation of apathy surely did not absolve any government from giving the electorate the opportunity to decide so momentous an issue as the one under debate. And nothing could have been more ill-conceived than the *gaffe* that was to follow. "The bones of the great and illustrious Uthman⁵ dan Fodio," he declaimed, "would shake in their grave if it were possible for him to listen to one of his descendants. . . ."⁶

Such a grossly impious reference to their sainted Uthman was, to the North, inexcusable, and Sardauna sprang to his feet, trembling with anger. "Order," he called. "No more the name of Chief Uthman to be pronounced in this House."⁷ The Northern members roared their support. "Why? Why?" came from the benches opposite. For a while there was confusion. Then, with order restored, but before the question was put, the Action Group and their NCNC supporters walked out. They knew that they would be outvoted.

When the House met on the following morning, a message from the Governor was read announcing the resignation of the Action Group Ministers. Then came statements from the Ministers concerned and from the NCNC Ministers explaining their differing standpoints. Finally, the motion for the adjournment and Sardauna's closing words, "The mistake of 1914 [when the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were united] has now come to light. . . ."⁸

The House then adjourned. But a reception had been prepared outside for the Northern members. As soon as they emerged to seek their cars, an organized mob of Ibo and Yoruba hooligans surrounded them, screaming insults, and only police intervention saved them from rough handling. This was not all. In the town their personal servants were subjected to the same treatment, and

5. Uthman, Othman, Usuman, or Usumanu are variants of the same word.

6. *Nigeria House of Representatives Debates*, March 31, 1953, p. 999.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, 1052.

that night the chiefs, in particular, found themselves a target for abuse shouted at them from the darkness whenever they were observed through the lighted windows of their lodgings. Even on their way home by train, the coaches of Northern members had to be guarded by police at every station until they had crossed the border into their own region. The crowning insult came in the heart of the region itself when Ibo and Yoruba railway employees at the big railway workshops in Zaria threatened and reviled the Kano and Katsina members as they steamed through.

Courtesy and restraint in human dealings had always been fundamental to the Northern philosophy of life, and no one who knew them was surprised when Northern leaders publicly announced that never again would they permit their chiefs to be subjected to such treatment nor would they, themselves, ever consent to return to Lagos. If this was democracy, they wanted none of it. The constitution had collapsed.

II

It was my task, as far as my own region was concerned, to pick up the shattered fragments of Nigerian unity and do my best to piece them together. But before tempers had even begun to cool, the follies that had caused the emotional outbursts in Lagos were to be repeated with even less excuse.

This time, Kano was to be the stage. In all the larger urban centers of the North, *Sabon Garis* (new towns) had sprung up to house alien communities from other parts of Nigeria, and from elsewhere in Africa, whose religion and way of life did not conform with that of the people of the country. These communities had come, in the first instance, in the train of the British administrators and merchants of the early years of the occupation. These men from Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and the Southern Provinces of Nigeria manned the public offices and the offices of the commercial houses as clerks and technicians, for there were no trained Northerners.

As time went on, the newcomers brought their families or, maybe, married locally, settling down after their retirement and adopting the customs and sometimes the religion of the country.

And, year by year, their relatives followed them, establishing themselves in petty trade or as contractors and transporters.

These early settlers lived their lives at peace with all around them, and so it might have continued, but during and after World War II the old-time Southerner, who had been liked and respected, began to be replaced by a younger and more aggressive generation. These newcomers did not hesitate to show their contempt for the largely illiterate, easygoing Northerner and, for that matter, for the educated Northerner as well. Exploitation of the poor and ignorant by such men as these soon became commonplace on the railways, in the post offices, at the produce-buying stations, everywhere, in fact, where petty officialdom found an opportunity to abuse its position.

To take one instance. It was common talk that the staff, all Southerners, at many country railway stations would often wait until the last possible moment before opening the ticket and baggage offices in order to overcharge the frantic passengers as they struggled to buy their tickets and weigh their luggage before the train departed. Then there was the "pill peddling racket" which the handful of doctors and European Nursing Sisters, all of them heavily overworked, found it impossible to check. Knowing that a ready and profitable market existed for drugs such as penicillin and the sulfonamides in the *Sabon Garis*, the subordinate hospital staff saw little wrong in depriving illiterate and ignorant patients of the whole or part of what the doctors had prescribed for them.

It was not only the ignorant and illiterate who suffered. Young Northerners now coming forward to take their place in government service or private business were finding unsuspected obstacles in their path. The chief clerks, the foremen, the contractors were all of alien stock, and somebody's brother or cousin of another race always seemed to be ahead of them in the queue.

The one matter in which I found Northern Ministers, who were essentially reasonable men, quite obdurate was in connection with the employment in the region of Ibos and Yorubas and other Southerners. They felt that the Northern peoples had been more than sufficiently exploited, and they produced both arguments

and evidence to support their attitude. Nothing would persuade them to compromise.

I knew very well how sorely tried they had been in recent years, but I could not easily erase from my mind my own earlier experiences in the provinces. There was a long line of divisional clerks, subpostmasters, and local stationmasters, public servants of the old school, simple, honest men who, toiling uncomplainingly up to all hours, had been invaluable friends and allies, in their slow painstaking way, both to me and to other lonely, overworked British officials. Men such as these, however, were now labeled by politicians in the East and West as "Uncle Toms," "stool pigeons," and "stooges."

The largest *Sabon Gari* in the North was at Kano. Here twelve thousand Ibos and six thousand Yorubas formed the bulk of a population of twenty thousand, only a few hundred of whom came from the North. Adjoining the *Sabon Gari*, across an open stretch of ground, lay Fagge, the old caravan quarter of Kano, and beyond Fagge, the city itself with a population of over a hundred thousand. And it was toward Kano that the leaders of the Action Group now turned their eyes in planning what the party newspapers elected to term a "national crusade for freedom."⁹ The NCNC, for their part, were busily organizing a descent on Kaduna at the very time when the emirs and their followers would be assembling in that town in readiness for a meeting of the House of Chiefs.

Our hearts sank when we heard the news. It could not be true. Nothing could be more calculated to provoke violent disorders in both places. Kano was dynamite at any time, and in Kaduna the fierce followers of the chiefs would retaliate instantly and bloodily were there to be any repetition of the events in Lagos.

Such then was the position, and I found it most difficult to understand how it could come about that otherwise intelligent people could be so completely insensitive to the religious and cultural susceptibilities of their fellow Nigerians of other races. Here were the representatives of political parties with a mere handful of supporters in the North, thousands among hundreds

9. *Daily Service* (Lagos), May 9, 1953.

of thousands, proposing to venture militantly into the towns and cities of people whose leaders they had gravely insulted. They had been amply warned, yet it seemed that no light could gleam red enough to stay their forward march toward disastrous events.

We of the regional government had much to worry us when we heard what was being planned. There was outside opinion to consider. The right of free speech and the right of assembly must be accorded up to, and sometimes beyond, the point of safety. But what was planned seemed, by all sane standards, to be bare-faced provocation. Yet there were British officials in Lagos who could not understand the depths of feeling that this deliberate trampling on deeply rooted susceptibilities must inevitably generate. We were blandly told that the peoples of the North must learn to take "the cut and thrust of democratic political life." Maybe they should, according to the lights of others, and no doubt they would learn one day, but these ideas were wholly new to them and this was no time to ride roughshod over all the things they cherished most dearly.

The proposed Action Group meeting in Kano *Sabon Gari* was due to take place on May 16. We were now at the peak of the hot season, and sweltering days and stifling nights in seemingly endless succession were not calculated to soothe nerves already frayed and tempers already inflamed. Those responsible for maintaining order in Kano were therefore scarcely surprised to learn that there had been unusually heavy purchases of machetes and thefts of scrap iron and that a large grindstone in one of the principal garages had been found worn right down as a result of clandestine sharpening operations overnight. The *Sabon Gari* was evidently expecting trouble and was making ready a supply of its customary weapons.

As evidence of mounting public resentment at the proposed Action Group meeting began to accumulate from inside Kano city itself, Douglas Pott, who was at this time Acting Resident, became convinced that the meeting should not take place, and arrangements were made for the news of the cancellation to be broadcast throughout the city and its suburbs.

Yet, despite the clear evidence that serious trouble was brewing, this action drew a vigorous protest from the Western Minister

who was leading the "unit" detailed to "storm Kano," to use his party's singularly infelicitous description of the proposed operation. Indeed, that very morning, the *Daily Service*, the Action Group paper, had announced that Northern "reactionaries" were "on the run" and that "they were scared at the possibility of the people [of the North] being told the truth."

But the cancellation of the meeting came too late. The proposal to hold it had in itself done all the damage that was necessary to provoke trouble. At three that afternoon, at the original advertised time of starting, a procession of Northerners, some armed, some mounted, disobeying their Emir's broadcast instructions to remain at home, moved into the *Sabon Gari*. But before a clash occurred, thanks largely to the joint efforts of British police officers and John Purdy, the D.O., this gathering was persuaded to retire homeward.

But there was much more than politics involved. There was the pent-up resentment of years, and while responsible citizens would still obey orders, the hooligans and men of violence—of whom Kano, as well as Lagos, had more than a full share—had no such inhibitions. There were old scores to settle and the prospect of loot into the bargain. They were spoiling for a fight, and some hundreds of them began to throw stones and to break into the outlying houses on the *Sabon Gari* perimeter. Others looked for easier targets. They had not long to wait. It was now after four thirty and time for *Sabon Gari* residents who were employed in the business area and in public offices to come home from work. Soon the open space between the *Sabon Gari* and Kano proper was dotted with hunted men, pursued by groups of Northerners armed with sticks and stones.

Meanwhile, another band of hooligans, its numbers rapidly growing, began to force its way into the *Sabon Gari* itself, and the main body of the blue-clad NA Police, organized in riot squads, was brought into action. The police, many of them bearded veterans of Burma, had little difficulty in driving off the first groups of rioters. Their tin helmets and wicker riot shields protected them from the worst of the stoning, and the hooligans soon broke and ran.

But the Ibos themselves were now taking a hand. Numbers

of them followed up the charging police, stoning the retreating Northerners over their heads. Others, in armed bands, wandered round the *Sabon Gari* hunting out isolated Northerners and, in unreasoning fury, even attacking the NA Police who were there to defend them.

As the rioting spread, fresh bands of hooligans, smelling loot, swarmed out of Fagge and the city behind, and before long the three-mile perimeter of the *Sabon Gari* was under attack from several quarters. Soon every NA Police unit in the area was committed, together with a hundred Nigeria Police who had been held in reserve. For a while it seemed as if the Nigeria Police might have to open fire. But with nightfall heavy fighting ceased, the known casualties being three dead and several score injured. This was the picture presented to me when Douglas Pott rang up that night to report. For the moment all was quiet, but tomorrow would be Sunday, when no one had to work, and we could well find that more trouble lay ahead.

We had, in Kaduna, already made preparations to deal with an extension of the riots, for every large center in the North had its emergency plan which would come into operation whenever a breakdown in public order occurred or was threatened. In Kaduna itself there was a co-ordinating body for the entire region, with representatives from the administration, the police, and the army.

In a tense situation, such as the one which we were facing, too early a deployment of force could be unwise. The striking force of 450 police in Kano would have been sufficient for anything short of the general outbreak of violence that had been raging that evening. Now we must send in reinforcements, and when Douglas telephoned, a hundred Nigeria Police were already climbing into their lorries. As a further precaution, Tom Hill, our Brigadier, had agreed to put the Light Battery at readiness to move early next morning.

The mere presence of troops in the background would have a sobering effect in Kano, and the gunners, the most highly disciplined unit in Kaduna, would, operating as infantry, take over the airport, the power station, the water works and other "vital points" from the Kano police. In addition, our main reserve of

police in Kaduna would still be available should trouble break out in Jos or Zaria or here in Kaduna itself.

At eight o'clock next morning, Douglas again telephoned. The news was worse. Crowds from Fagge and the city were massing in far greater force than on the previous day, and there had already been heavy fighting. The police were having the greatest difficulty in keeping the Northerners out of the *Sabon Gari*. Could he have as many police as possible and two companies of infantry in case the police should be overwhelmed? A Northern breakthrough into the *Sabon Gari* could mean a massacre. This was grim news indeed, and I immediately rang up Government House, Lagos, to tell Sir John Macpherson how we were situated, to ask for transport aircraft to move police and troops, and to request emergency powers to be put into force immediately in all provinces likely to become affected, should the trouble spread.

The response was generous and immediate, and soon after mid-day the leading aircraft had completed its four-hundred-mile journey from Lagos and was touching down in Kaduna ready to embark the Acting Commissioner of Police, Hodgkinson, with the first lift of police. They were badly needed. At ten o'clock that morning, the overnight reinforcements of police from Kaduna had jumped from their lorries straight into action, the nature of which is well illustrated by extracts from the official diary of one of the Police Superintendents concerned.

10:20 hrs. Many Hausa seen to be looting and breaking into Ibo houses. . . . Advance with one baton wave on each side of central sewer. . . . Dane gun fire from Ibos, hitting one Hausa in the knee. Smoke grenades thrown, driving Ibos north. Hausas looting driven off. Ibos advance again, most armed with machetes. Smoke grenades thrown followed by riot gun shells driving them far back.

10:45 hrs. Met by severe stone throwing from [Hausa and Ibo] rioters. Smoke grenades thrown and riot gun fired with little effect. Forced to retire slowly to corner. Shot fired from Ibos and one Hausa falls. Reform and advance again using riot gun and smoke grenades. Again forced to retire as attacked by Hausas and Ibos. . . . Ibos appear to be mutilating the Hausa who fell. . . . Smoke rises from his body and seemingly an attempt is being made to set it on fire. 13:00 hrs. Large crowd of Hausas looting and fighting with Ibos. About six shots heard from behind the Ibos, Dane gun and shot gun. 16:30 hrs. Examine body [of Hausa] killed earlier. Knife mutilations and castration.

Constables report another. . . . Examine it. Naked, mutilated and castrated. . . ." ¹⁰

By noon, the Ibo bands had worked themselves into a state of frenzy and were dancing round the *Sabon Gari* streets, venting their feelings on any Hausa-owned livestock they happened to encounter. A score or more donkeys, a horse, and many goats were senselessly macheted to death during these outbursts of hysteria.

And at this moment, Dr. Azikiwe and other NCNC leaders were on their way North by train for their own convention, scheduled to take place in Kaduna at the very time, as I have earlier recorded, when the chiefs and their followers would be assembled for the House of Chiefs. For good measure, another Action Group unit was also northward bound.

Already, in anticipation of Zik's arrival, bands of Ibos dressed as cowboys—an odd extravagance to which young NCNC members had recently become addicted—were daily parading Kaduna *Sabon Gari*. Here was a reminder, if any were needed, that were events permitted to take their course, we could well find ourselves faced with a repetition of the Kano affair with only one reserve unit of police left in the capital.

I therefore telephoned Max Backhouse, then Resident at Minna, to meet Zik's train with a personal message from me. This was simply that, owing to events in Kano, the military was now in control in Kaduna, feelings were running high, and I strongly advised that he postpone his visit. Zik was not a man to be swayed by the emotions into disregarding good advice, and he and his party returned to Lagos. At which I heaved a sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, in Kano itself, the moment of crisis had come. Hodgkinson's seven hundred police were all now committed, and the army, having taken over Advanced Police Headquarters, was poised to intervene should the mob, now massed in thousands, break through. And that would mean shooting.

Overnight, the rioters had lost all remaining vestiges of self-control. Already infuriated by the mutilation of their fellows and by the score or so casualties inflicted by Ibo gunfire they were now further inflamed by persistent rumors that Northern women

10. Northern Regional Government, *Report on the Kano Disturbances* (Kaduna, 1953), pp. 13-14.

in *Sabon Gari* were being attacked, their husbands having already been murdered and their bodies secretly buried. In revenge the mob had begun to hunt down Ibos who had been given shelter by friendly Northerners in Fagge. One gang had butchered and set alight with petrol at least ten of these helpless creatures, and the slaughter would by now have been greater had it not been for rescue operations on the previous day by European Special Constables and NA Police.

For the time being, the main body of rioters was concentrated in Fagge, and it was with the safety of the scores of Southerners still in hiding there in his mind that Hodgkinson now drove to the Residency. He wished to send in a force of police to break up the crowds before more murders were committed. But this, as he knew, could not be achieved without opening fire.

Douglas Pott's response was to ask the Emir to call an immediate council meeting. He felt that one last effort must be made to disperse the crowd by other means. He was convinced, and all present at the council meeting were later to agree with him, that were the police, a high proportion of whom were non-Muslims from the southerly parts of the region, to shoot down Muslim Northerners, the effect would be catastrophic. As soon as the news spread there would be very few Southerners left in Kano Province or in the neighboring provinces either.

Having given his account to the council, Douglas Pott suggested that the Emir himself might drive to Fagge and personally order the rioters to their homes. For a moment there was dead silence. Then the Chiroma replied, with the council nodding agreement, that if the Emir were seen to leave the palace bound for Fagge, the cry would at once go up, as in the old days, "*Sarki ya hau*," and the people would believe that their chief had come forth in person to lead them into battle against the infidels. Were that to happen, nothing would save the *Sabon Gari*; the whole city would swarm to the attack, as though to a Holy War. Finally, it was agreed that two councilors and the D.O., John Purdy, should make a last attempt to bring the mob to reason.

But when the three men, in their cars and unescorted, reached the outskirts of Fagge it looked as though they would be denied entry, so densely packed and hostile were the crowds. Slowly and

patiently, however, they edged their way forward, the mob swirling around them shouting and gesticulating, cudgels in hand, until the moment came for them to leave their cars. At once they were separated from one another as the crowd milled madly to and fro around them in a state bordering on hysteria. Every appeal was met with a flood of angry denunciation. "Why have you brought in police from the South?" "Why have you allowed those police to give the Ibos cartridges?" "The Ibos are killing our brothers in the *Sabon Gari*." "We must kill the unbelievers, the Kafirai, before they kill us." Had John Purdy, with his familiar blue bush shirt, been less well liked or had any one of the three shown the slightest sign of fear, they would all, as they knew well, have been pulled down and beaten to death.

Then, when it seemed as though nothing would calm them, the mood of the rioters suddenly changed and they began to listen. Soon, flinging their cudgels on the ground, they started to disperse, and when a party of Northerners who had been cut off in *Sabon Gari* were brought in, obviously unmolested, it was plain that the madness would now pass. By next morning a reconciliation committee had been formed, the market had been reopened, and two communities had begun cautiously to get on terms with each other again.

So ended the Kano riots, at the cost of thirty-six lives and many times that number injured. Tragic though these losses were to Nigeria, they were, I suppose, small when compared with the slaughter that had taken place during the communal rioting in the Punjab during the time of Partition. Perhaps it was this that made people in Nigeria and Britain fail to realize how narrowly we had escaped a far worse disaster. It was not what had happened in and around Kano at this time that was significant, it was what had been within an ace of happening. Had the police faltered and let the mob through, the dead would have been numbered in hundreds. And had it been necessary for the police or troops to open fire as, according to critics in Lagos and elsewhere in the South and even in the United Kingdom, they should have done in any case, the retribution in the opinion of everyone then qualified to judge would have been swift and terrible throughout the region. As it was, there were half a dozen incidents, one involving

a crowd of several hundreds, at points many miles from Kano. Maybe, because Pakistan and 1947 were far away, people had forgotten what passions could be aroused in a virile Muslim people when in conflict with men of another faith and race.

For the moment violence had ended, but resentment still smoldered fiercely just below the surface, and I strenuously resisted pressure, particularly from the Lagos press, that there should be a commission of inquiry. The responsible members of both communities must be allowed to work out things quietly in their own way without the sort of irresponsible interference from outside that had provoked the riots in the first place. They had lived next door to each other in reasonable harmony before and they could do so again, particularly as recent events had given both sides a healthy respect for each other's fighting qualities. They now knew the price of violence. Sir John Macpherson, who visited Kaduna at this time, agreed that the wiser course would be for the regional government to hold its own inquiry.

On the very day that the riots broke out the members of the House of Assembly were gathering to debate the region's future. There had already been much talk among the leaders of a break away from the rest of Nigeria. "The mistake of 1914," to quote Sardauna's words in the House of Representatives on the first of April, must be put right. The crippling economic disadvantages of secession were recognized. But, "We are Muslims," Makama said. "We know how to tighten our belts." His fellow leaders agreed. Other nations could exist without an outlet to the sea. In any case, the Niger was an international waterway, and the port of Baro could be developed. An agreement might be reached with the Southern Cameroons—whose people feared and mistrusted the Ibos on their western borders—or with Dahomey. The Porto Novo Railway might be extended to the Niger near southern Sokoto. Help would come from brother Muslims across the Sahara. When the riots had broken out there was even talk of an exchange of populations as had occurred in the Punjab after the massacres consequent on the partition of India.

In Lagos and in London such talk seemed visionary, but at the time, the North was in deadly earnest, and I could only hope that a greater understanding of the political realities of Northern

intransigence would dawn in the minds of the leaders of the other two parties and that compromise would follow.

When the House met, having first overwhelmingly rejected "Self Government in 1956," it debated and carried, as convincingly, a resolution advocating complete regional autonomy except in matters concerned with defense, external affairs, and customs. The resolution also insisted that there must be no central executive and no central legislature in this new model Nigeria. Co-ordination would be the responsibility of a "central agency," similar in conception to the East African High Commission which then administered interterritorial services on behalf of Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda. I, as Lieutenant Governor, was asked to "set up consultative machinery" to ascertain the wishes of the people of the Region on these matters.

Then, while the House was still sitting, there came the first ray of hope, an announcement in the House of Commons in London that the British government was prepared to redraw the constitution in such a manner as to provide for greater regional autonomy. It was at this point that, by happy circumstance, preparations for the forthcoming Coronation served to divert the minds of all but a few from politics to pageantry. The Northern people had always taken occasions of this nature seriously. Much preliminary organization would be needed for the ceremonies that were planned throughout the region, and time was short.

Time was even shorter for the canvassing of public opinion that had been demanded by the regional legislature. However, the native administration machinery was well designed for a tour de force of this nature, and what came to be known as the *Tambayoyi Bakwai* (the Seven Questions) on the region's political future were swiftly circulated to every NA in every province and put to each individual local council. The result was overwhelming support for the proposals of the NPC, except in a number of non-Muslim areas.

Once the delegation was on its way I began to make my preparations for a leisurely journey home on leave by sea. I had no desire to be in England while the conference was sitting. Current NCNC and Action Group jibes to the effect that Northern leaders were the "mindless mouthpieces of senior white officials" should

not be given any shadow of substance. The battle was theirs and they must fight it. But we gave them, as private secretaries, the pick of the coming young men in the administration.

By the time I reached home it was all over as far as the vital decisions were concerned. The North's Special Agency had commended itself neither to the other two main political parties nor to Oliver Lyttelton, the Secretary of State, himself. Instead, it had been proposed that Nigeria should become a federation under a Governor General. A federal House of Representatives would replace the present House. Each region would have almost complete internal autonomy with its own Governor, its own Premier, and its own High Court and Public Service. Lagos would become federal territory. At first, the North had resisted compromise, but, finally, conscious that the region would be master in its own house, the Sardauna agreed to federation.

That the conference, despite moments of deadlock and drama, was so successful was primarily due to Oliver Lyttelton, the chairman. For him it was a personal triumph. His precision and firmness gained him the confidence of the leaders of all parties, who noted with respect his independence of his official advisers and his refusal to be impressed by mere rhetoric or by blatantly pretentious claims.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, as leaders of the main parties were occupied with matters of urgency, a brisk struggle had been going on between the emissaries of Moral Re-Armament and the British Communist party for the minds of a number of the rank and file of the various delegations. But a few weeks was not enough for either party to achieve results. It was the students who resided in London over long periods who were more vulnerable to Communist influence. Tukur Yauri, now far from his native Yelwa and a lecturer in Hausa at the School of African and Oriental Studies, commented when we met one day in London on the pressure exerted on many of these young men. They were often lonely and indifferently lodged, and it was to their credit and little thanks to local enterprise that so few lost their heads. Tukur, by temperament and outlook as immune as any to indoctrination, told me of the efforts of his own roommate to convert him. He made a most amusing story of the episode, but

even his patience had worn thin and he had asked to be moved to another hostel. Other Northern students known to him had been similarly pestered.

At that time, and later, any suggestion that communism could be a menace in Africa was widely laughed to scorn in Britain. We in Nigeria knew, too, that the soil was unpropitious, but it was not communism as a doctrine that we feared. The danger lay rather in the covert fostering by organized communism of any individual or group seeking to overthrow established authority for political ends. And there was never any lack of ambitious individuals who were known to be ready to accept money or aid in other forms from any source provided only that they felt that their path to power might, thereby, be made the easier.

III

In October there was to be more trouble in Kano. As I was listening with half an ear one evening to the B.B.C. news bulletin my attention was suddenly riveted by the words "police reinforcements" and "rioting in Kano." "Oh no," I thought, "not again," as an unwelcome vision of myself hurriedly flying back halfway through my leave rose before my eyes. But the announcer went on to say that the rioting had taken place inside Kano city itself, and my mind eased. The trouble was obviously between rival groups of Northerners and not, as in May, between Northerners and Ibos.

This was unpleasant, though not unexpected, news. Very recently, the extreme right wing of the NPC in Kano, exasperated at being for four years the target for NEPU abuse, had formed a militant organization sworn to retaliate. The climax, in their eyes, had come on the day that the Northern delegation to the Constitutional Conference had left for London. As the party was about to emplane a hundred or more NEPU adherents had, by premeditated plan, suddenly surged onto the tarmac screaming abuse and jostling the NPC Ministers and their fellow delegates.

The counterorganization now formed, which appropriately termed itself the *Mahaukata* (the Madmen) and whose emblem was a bow and arrow on red ground, had little difficulty in finding

recruits mainly from among the hangers-on of influential families and officeholders. Its members were as rabidly anti-British as anti-NEPU, for the patrons of the movement saw in the liberal policies of the administration a threat to the continued enjoyment of their perquisites and privileges. Numbering, as they did, in their ranks some of the more brutalized of the criminal classes, men whose chosen weapons were the dagger and the ax, the *Mahaukata* were, for a time, an even greater menace than the NEPU gangs, which had, so far, restricted themselves to stone throwing and cudgel play.

Before many months had passed the turn of events was to provide an instrument for their undoing. A few days before Christmas I arrived in Jos on my way back from a tour, to hear that the Emir of Kano was seriously ill and sinking fast. On December 24, 1953, he died. We had known for some time that the old man, for whom we all had a deep affection, could not last long, and we were prepared. Now it would be possible, by moving swiftly, to bring those reforms to Kano which alone could assuage the popular discontent lying smoldering beneath the surface, held in check only out of respect for a revered and well-loved Emir, now dead.

As I have made clear earlier, the responsibility for choosing a new emir lies with the Traditional Selectors. But it rested with the Lieutenant Governor to accord, or withhold, the official recognition without which an emir is not legally entitled to exercise his full authority. Normally, recognition was little more than a formality, but the situation in Kano was abnormal, and here was an opportunity that it would be folly to miss. I therefore decided that, as the price of recognition, I must break with precedent and insist that the new emir should introduce certain reforms whose import he must broadcast to his people on the day of his appointment. These reforms were, briefly, that in future the emir's court would sit in public and not in the inner recesses of his palace, that all transactions in land sited in and around the city would be recorded in a land registry open to the public, and that no near member of the emir's family would in future be appointed by him to a key post in the administration which was not traditionally in his gift. Finally, certain associates of the late Emir,

whose betrayal of his trust in them was a byword, would now be required to leave the palace precincts. My own part in these matters should remain undisclosed. The new emir should take all the credit. He would need it.

The choice fell, as expected, on Muhammedu Sanusi, the Chiroma. He stood head and shoulders above all other possible candidates and, unrepentant autocrat though he was at heart, was shrewd enough to see the advantages in assuming office in the character of a reformer. Both he and his council accepted the conditions without demur.

Indeed, he was to prove better than his word. The people of Kano listened to his broadcast with almost incredulous delight. But that incredulity was soon to vanish when, within days, a swarm of laborers began to hack a wide gap in the high outer wall of the palace to reveal the foundations of a new court house. Popularity came to him overnight, a popularity that was soon to be enhanced as further reforms were introduced.

Political perception was not the only quality that the new Emir was to reveal. He soon made it plain that moral courage was not least among his qualities. Although the *Mahaukata* were secretly subsidized and encouraged by some of his principal supporters, an astonished city was soon to hear that he had, in person, sentenced some of their more notorious leaders to exemplary prison sentences, as severe, if not severer, than those inflicted on their NEPU opponents. He took the cases in person to make it clear that it was his will that there should be an end to gang warfare in the city and that the political affiliations of the opposing factions were no concern of his.

As further evidence that times had changed the new Emir took especial pains to restore confidence in the *Sabon Gari*, whose inhabitants were still none too sure that some unexpected occurrence might not involve them in fresh violence. Muhammedu Sanusi's feelings toward Ibos and their kind were no warmer than those of any other Fulani aristocrat of his time, but the people of *Sabon Gari* were his people and their presence was essential to Kano's prosperity. Occasionally, however, he overstepped the mark, and it took all the tact and diplomacy that Weatherhead, then Resident, could muster to persuade him to

vary or reverse his court judgments rather than risk the humiliation of having them upset on appeal in the British courts. His court officials, too, and red-robed Dogarai were far too ready to rough handle, sometimes brutally, argumentative and obstreperous offenders.

This bullying and brutality on the part of petty officialdom could be, and was, brought under control. What mattered far more was the ever present danger that rival gangs might again erupt into the city streets stoning and stabbing. All the ingredients needed for a fresh explosion of violence were there, and only a strong, impartial ruler could avert that violence. Kano had now found that ruler. Many years later, after independence, things were to go badly wrong in Kano, several members of the Emir's council were to be dismissed, and the Emir himself is now living in retirement in another emirate. A sad ending for a man whose powerful personality for so long kept mass violence from the city's streets, an achievement for which much might be forgiven him when the full history of those times is written.

In January, 1954, the Constitutional Conference had resumed in Lagos, again under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State. While the main outlines of the new Nigeria had been agreed in London, much detailed work remained to be done before the revised constitution could take shape. High among outstanding matters in our own minds were the structure and jurisdiction of the proposed regional High Court. We had good reason, for we had for some time been seriously worried at the diminishing prestige of the British courts of justice in the region and were relying largely on the establishment of the new High Court, and other legislative measures that we had in mind, to set matters right.

Some months earlier the Colonial Office had circulated a report from East Africa which quoted instances where English law and legal procedure had operated in a way that had resulted in loss of public confidence in our courts. Comment was invited from West African territories. Hedley Marshall, our Legal Secretary, and I had for some time been drawing up a list of instances of the type of occurrence that lay at the root of our own troubles. This circular gave us the opening that we needed, for to indict

the law and the method by which it was administered, which is what we proposed, was a serious undertaking.

Our own difficulties sprang from two main causes. First, the British courts and the law that they administered were being constantly abused for political ends, and, second, they no longer catered, in a way that was manifest to all, for the needs of the people as a whole.

At one time most judges who sat in the North had begun their careers in Nigeria as District Officers or police officers as a preliminary to transferring to the magistracy whence they had eventually graduated to the bench. Thus, in their early years they had gained a knowledge of the language and the customs of the people that enabled them to view with understanding the problems of those who appeared before them in the dock or in the witness box. In addition, they could keep a check on their court interpreters, a class of official that was often fallible and occasionally venal.

But these judges of the old school had by now all retired, and coincidentally with their departure sweeping changes had come to the North. Improved communications and expanding trade had opened up new centers for development, and areas previously barely accessible were coming under closer administration. In consequence, while more than nine out of ten of all cases heard or tried in the region were still dealt with by the native courts, many more cases were now arising in the remoter parts of the region that were outside the jurisdiction of these courts.

But some, though by no means all, of the new judges did not take kindly to a posting to the North. Lacking any experience of the region, they felt themselves out of sympathy with the people and their surroundings. They missed the company of fellow members of their own profession in this predominantly Muslim world, and they disliked the relative austerity of living conditions and, more particularly, the discomforts of touring.

Cases where the British courts and British legal processes were used either to defeat or to delay the course of justice for political ends fell into two categories. In Kano and the other northerly provinces the more militant followers of NEPU were in constant trouble with the authorities for riotous behavior. But enjoying,

as they did, NCNC support, they never lacked for lawyers to advise them how they might, on some legal technicality, avoid the consequences of their acts.

For instance, a number of the more violent of the NEPU hooligans who had attacked the delegates departing for the London conference from Kano airport had been arrested, tried, and sentenced in the appropriate alkali's court. They at once appealed. When the case came before the British judge the sentences were quashed and the prisoners discharged on what appeared to be completely trivial grounds. The alkali, it seems, had omitted to record in the proceedings the fact that his jurisdiction extended over the area where the offense had been committed. Such a record is required, apparently, under English common law. But niceties of this nature were news to our Muslim jurists. The Native Courts Ordinance provided that the practice and procedure in native courts should be governed by native law and custom, and in all their years of experience no one had ever required them to record their jurisdiction before. As for upsetting the finding in a case where the guilt of the accused was not for a moment in question, this was something they could not understand.

While the jubilation of the prisoners and their friends was short-lived, for the case was promptly retried before another alkali and the same sentence reimposed, the shock to public confidence was lasting. To the simple-minded and to the suspicious-minded it seemed plain that bias had been shown in favor of a band of law-breaking ruffians merely because of their political sympathies. "What we want," it was openly stated, "is British justice, not English law."

In the southerly provinces of the region circumstances were different. For reasons of judicial convenience these provinces were included in judicial divisions whose headquarters were situated in the capitals of the Eastern and Western Regions. On the Eastern side, this arrangement was annoying for litigants, but no great hardship or miscarriage of justice was involved. On the Western side, however, it was another matter.

For a long time the Action Group had been campaigning to secure the transfer of the greater part of Ilorin Province and part of Kabba Province from the Northern to the Western Region on

the grounds that the inhabitants were of Yoruba stock. This transfer of more than half a million people would considerably strengthen the Action Group vis-à-vis the NCNC, and party prestige soon became involved. But the Ilorin and Kabba Yoruba showed no strong inclination to sever a connection of a century and a half with their Northern neighbors, and after careful investigation the Governor had decided that there was no case for a change.

But this setback only spurred Action Group militants to renewed attempts, backed by bribery and violence, to spread disaffection and promote public unrest in order to achieve their objective. To make matters worse, cases between those who supported the lawfully established authority of the local administration and those who sought to overthrow it were liable to be tried in the hostile atmosphere of the Western Region. Here, according to chapter and verse statements by British police officers and other independent observers, the bullying of witnesses and instances of questionable practice on the part of counsel, court officials, and even the occasional magistrate of local origin who supported the Action Group line at times reached scandalous proportions.

It is not surprising, in these circumstances, that Northern leaders were adamant that under no circumstances would they agree to have African judges in the region, for this would mean judges of Southern origin. In making this stand they did scant justice to the Ibo and Yoruba judges of that period and later, who were men of high integrity and judicial ability. It was the lesser fry, who were susceptible to political pressure, that the Northern leaders had learned to distrust, and they felt that they must look to the future. The caliber of the bench might one day deteriorate, and this they would not risk.

To meet immediate needs Hedley Marshall drafted legislation to block the more obvious legal loopholes through which the subversively minded might contrive to slither when called to account. This, however, was merely a palliative, and something much more positive was needed. For us to find ourselves at issue with the law on a matter which surely no judge could view with complacency, once he appreciated the full implications, was quite absurd. Yet, on the surface, the bench in Nigeria seemed to be

unaware that anything was wrong. Loyalty to colleagues and professional decorum made a candid interchange of views difficult, and such tentative approaches as I had been able to make had not taken me any distance. I badly needed to hear the viewpoint of some eminent member of the legal profession who was sufficiently detached from the scene to be able to listen to a frank exposition of our troubles.

An opportunity had come when I found myself traveling on the same boat, bound for Nigeria, as the then President of the West African Court of Appeal, Sir Stafford Foster Sutton. There was common ground between us in that we were fellow members of that diminishing band, the pilots of the Royal Flying Corps of the First World War. In more recent years he had acted as Governor both of Kenya and of Malaya. He could therefore, if approached, view our problems with the eyes of an administrator as well as with those of a judge.

As acquaintance ripened I began to feel that he was a man to whom I could unburden myself. This I eventually did with complete candor. I met with a response that was both sympathetic and helpful and one that gave me the moral encouragement that I needed. And this was to be only a beginning, for although I did not know it at the time, I was making my appeal to the future Chief Justice of the Federation and the source-to-be, on a number of occasions, of further friendly counsel on matters connected with the region.

But it was the new constitution, above all else, that would provide us with the opportunity to disembarass ourselves of much that now troubled us in our dealings with the law. In the first place we could expect to have a Chief Justice of our own who would identify himself with the people of the region, understand them, and gain their confidence. He would be a man, we hoped, who would not regard a journey to our border provinces as a necessary evil rarely to be undertaken, but one who would gladly tour them widely and frequently and insure that his judges held their sessions there at need. He would be a man who, in brief, would oversee justice from close at hand and with a sympathetic mind.

Again, with our own regional courts, there would be no ques-

tion any more of cases arising in the region being brought to trial outside the region and under conditions where hostile political pressure was high. Neither would there be so many opportunities for guilty men to escape the consequences of their acts by resort to legal loopholes or by delaying tactics based on technicalities. The new High Court law, when drafted, would take care of that.

In Hedley Marshall, Attorney General designate under the new constitution, the region had a servant and a friend who understood its present problems and foresaw those that might arise in the future. He had a positive approach toward everything that he undertook that cut right through the tangle of technicalities that are apt to beset the path of every lawyer who seeks to break new ground. And he had a sympathetic understanding of human nature and a nicely balanced sense of humor that was to prove a tonic to all of us in the wearing years that lay ahead.

IV

In the course of the previous year's debate on self-government in the House of Assembly a back-bench member had complained that 95 per cent of the Civil Service in the North came from outside the region. This was no news to Ministers, and we were already doing all we could to redress the balance. Among other projects, we had decided to enlarge our one small Clerical Training College, which was situated at Zaria, and to add to it a local government wing. This remodeled training college would be renamed the Institute of Administration.

I am uncertain in whose mind the original idea took root, but it was mainly due to Sardauna's drive and inspiration, first as Minister for Local Government and later as Premier, that the institute was before many years to achieve an international reputation. It was to number, among those who were to visit it, eminent men and women of many lands, Prime Ministers, Chief Justices, and High Commissioners, among them our own Harold Macmillan and the late Dag Hammarskjöld.

By far the most urgent need was a modernized district administration, and it was district administration and accounting that the institute first tackled. Thus was born the fictitious Kongo

District Council, so designated because, during the war, troops from the Belgian Congo had been quartered in the buildings later occupied by the Clerical Training College, and the local population had named the locality after them.

The chairman, secretary, and members of this council, soon to become legendary throughout the region, were found from among the students while the supervisory staff devised the agenda. To the Hausa and their kin a sense of theater and a genius for improvisation are second nature, and successive generations of students played their appointed parts with realism and humor.

This was only a beginning. Four subsidiary training schools were established in outlying provinces, while at the institute itself, as fresh courses were organized, new lecture rooms, common rooms, hostels, and staff quarters rose to accommodate them. Playing fields and fives and squash courts were added, and the institute gradually began to take on the appearance of a university in embryo.

With expansion, the same imaginative techniques were applied to every fresh undertaking. Appointment to the staff, whether of British officers from government service or from the native administrations, came to be regarded as a mark of excellence. Soon it became possible to provide courses for high-ranking NA officials, members of emirs' councils, alkalai, native court officials, and District Heads. Even emirs and chiefs were persuaded to attend as "pupils," a development that, even a few years earlier, would have been unthinkable.

When the time came later for the first Northern Nigerians to be trained as Administrative Officers, it was to the institute that the regional government would turn. Later still, courses were to be devised for future barristers for the region's Legal Department and for potential police officers. But all this was in the future, and on that April morning of 1954 when the Governor, amid the pageantry in which the North delights on such occasions, performed the opening ceremony, none of us dreamed that we were witnessing the birth of an undertaking, unique of its kind, that would, above all others, insure that when independence came the North would be ready.

I must now briefly leave the new North of the future and

return to the old-time North of the great chiefs. Despite the Bornu affair and the enforced retirement of the Lamido of Adamawa, crises had later arisen in certain chiefdoms whose rulers still could not, or would not, adjust themselves to changing times. The great majority had accepted the new order of things from the beginning; a few others, whose consciences had not been so clear, had taken heed and mended their ways. There remained the handful, to whom I have referred, who had proved incorrigible. With these, one by one, and with the backing of the full Executive Council, the Sultan and his brother chiefs among them, I had been compelled to sterner action.

For me, personally, my role as final arbiter was both sad and distasteful. In almost every case the offenders were weak rather than wicked. They possessed both presence and ability, but their demands on their subjects, their misuse of public funds, and the license accorded to their favorites were unsuited to the Nigeria of 1954. Warnings had no effect, and they had to go. The first to fall had been Sama'ila of Argungu, whom I had known as a friend ever since 1929 when he was a young and unassuming schoolmaster with an assured future before him. Then came Mustapha of Dikwa, of the royal line of Bornu, a magnificently built man with a powerful personality, whom it was impossible not to like and admire in many ways, but not as the ruler of more than a quarter of a million people in the Nigeria of 1954. Perhaps saddest of all was the downfall of Yakubu of Bauchi, descendant of one of Shehu dan Fodio's flagbearers, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's own chief, and four places only below the Sultan in chiefly precedence. If ability and charm were all that were required in a chief, Yakubu's position would have been assured. But personal rule was all he understood and all that he was prepared to understand.

The final act took place in the drawing room of Government House. The Emir, his turban more loosely wound than usual, his gown crumpled from his long journey, sat hunched in an armchair. Grouped around him, a little unhappily, were his Waziri and leading members of his council. The next few minutes would give scant pleasure to any one of us. "Sarkin Bauchi," I began, "I greatly fear that we have come to the end of the road.

You have lost the confidence of both your council and your people, and nothing that your council and I have been able to do has persuaded you to change your ways. It is no longer possible for you to remain in office. You must now make your choice. Either you must go into retirement or face formal deposition. You should let me have your decision by this evening. There is now no more to be said." I rose and the Emir rose with me. We shook hands, and he left. A few hours later, his answer came. He would go into retirement.

With his two brother chiefs the pattern had been much the same. Both had been given the opportunity to retire, for such a course best suited the popular mood. In this way, both the individual and his office were spared humiliation. In each case the decision, once made, was accepted with dignity and without comment. Anything else would have been foreign to the nature of each one of them and entirely opposed to his conception of loyalty.

As far as my personal role was concerned, I am sure that matters were made easier because the chiefs had known me and my feelings toward them for a long while. Many years later, when my wife and I were passing through Kano on our way homeward after the Federal Independence Celebrations, the Emir was to say to me, "You made us do many things that we did not wish to do, but we knew that nothing would persuade you to any action that you thought might be harmful to the North, so we agreed."

Other heads had fallen besides those already named, but none of comparable standing. In only one instance was there any difficulty. The chief involved came from Kabba Province, south of the Niger-Benue line. In his case, not only his own council but every single district council in his chieftdom had rejected him. When confronted with the facts, he twisted and turned until I had to say to him, "I am sorry, but when you leave this house you will be no longer Chief of Igbirra. You may choose between retirement and deposition." He too chose retirement though, typically determined on the last word, "reserving his position." Few people like imposing their will on another in such circumstances, and in this instance the decision had been particularly

painful for me in that I knew well and liked and respected one of the ex-chief's sons, a man of very different outlook and a future High Commissioner for Nigeria in London.

About this time, and later, I acquired a reputation as the man who had broken the power of the great emirs. Nothing could have been further from the truth. To the end I remained convinced of the importance of the chiefly system, so long as it could be purged of its worst abuses and so long as it commanded the respect of the people. In my view, it was the one sure bulwark against the future domination of the region by a ruthlessly despotic party machine, a possibility that, if tendencies elsewhere in the country meant anything, was not entirely remote.

NIGERIA A FEDERATION

1954-1955

I

The revised constitution came into force on October 1. Three months earlier I had been offered and had accepted the Governorship, and on November 18 I was summoned to Buckingham Palace to "kiss hands" on assuming office. H. R. E. Browne, as Acting Governor, had presided over the inaugural ceremonies, the most significant of which was the installation of Sardauna as Premier. For "Phiz" Browne this was a fitting climax to a long career. For two and a half years he had patiently and skilfully shouldered the main burden of adjusting and reshaping the complex machinery of government at regional headquarters to accord with constitutional change. Now he was about to retire, and K. P. Maddocks, who had lately returned from a term in Lagos as Administrative Secretary, would succeed him.

At the Constitutional Conference the Northern political leaders, unlike those in the Eastern and Western Regions, had decided to retain the three principal British members of Executive Council, dispensing only with the two Residents. We now needed six new Ministers, for we had lost by retirement Wali Muhammed, now Waziri of Bornu, and Bello Kano. In their place we acquired Abba Habib, a Shuwa Arab from Bornu, and Isa Kaita, a son of the last Waziri of Katsina, a man of many talents with a full share of that smooth competence and suavity of manner that I had always associated with the leading families of that emirate. The new posts were filled by Shettima Kashim, a former Central Minister and Wali's comrade in arms in the Bornu affair, and Aliyu Turakin Zaria, a member of one of the Zaria ruling houses. Turaki was a shrewd, tough, combative man whom I, personally, found very likable. New Ministers without Portfolio were the Emir of

Kano and Pastor David Lot, a sincere little man from the Jos Plateau.

In order that Bello Kano's integrity and administrative ability should not be wholly lost to us in Kaduna, I appointed him to the Privy Council—a newly created body charged with advising the Governor on the exercise of the prerogative of mercy on the Sovereign's behalf—and, together with Abubakar Imam, no longer with *Gaskiya*, to our equally new Public Service Commission under the chairmanship of Dennis Hibbert, onetime Northern Deputy Director of Education.

In Northern Nigerian society power and patronage were synonymous, much as they had been in early eighteenth-century England. In former years it had been mainly the influence of Residents and D.O.'s that had kept nepotism in check. Now that power was beginning to pass from the hands of the British administration, civil servants, and particularly those from overseas, were asking what the future held. Would the Civil Service remain immune from political influence? Almost all our senior posts were, of necessity, manned by British officers, many of whom were already wondering whether or not to stay, for elsewhere in Nigeria something approaching an exodus had begun. Even the friendly North might not always remain friendly. It was therefore essential that our newly created Public Service Commission should inspire confidence and respect from the start. Happily it succeeded, but not without a few early skirmishes, for the Ministers took a little time to realize that casual promises to friends or acquaintances of appointment to a coveted government post or of transfer on promotion would surely come to nothing. It lay with the PSC to decide matters such as these.

These lurking doubts apart, the dawning of the new era was greeted by many officials, certainly by myself, with feelings bordering on elation. To those of us who wanted things done quickly and well the Ministerial form of government was far preferable to the centralized system that it had superseded. Now we would be able to dictate the direction and pace of our advance. We would be free to do things instead of writing about them, and we would be able to rid ourselves of much of the red tape that had hampered us in the past.

II

Among the amendments to the old constitution that had been conceded at the London conference had been a redefinition of the duties of Ministers. From now on they were to be charged with responsibility for the departments which lay within their portfolios and not merely for the subjects with which those departments dealt.

So far, relations between Ministers and the Civil Service had been relatively free from friction. The Administrative Service had always lived with the idea that their main purpose in life, in the political field, was to train the peoples among whom they served to manage their own affairs up to the point of self-government, and the more experienced of the Education Officers, who had been brought up in the same hard school as ourselves, shared the same viewpoint. Tony Shillingford, for instance, the Director of Education, had begun his first tour in Bornu with a three-hundred-mile trek on horseback from railhead to his headquarters. There were others like him who had also grown up in the region, and for them there was nothing particularly incongruous in their pupils of yesterday becoming the masters of today.

The reactions of most other departmental officers were very different. While a number of doctors, engineers, agriculturists, forestry officials, and veterinarians, who had served for long periods in the bush, had developed interests in the country which extended beyond their professional activities, the great majority felt that politics were none of their business. To the doctors the prevalence of a particular disease, the efficiency of their hospital staff, and the need for new equipment were what mattered most. To the engineers, the rate of progress of a trunk road, the structural safety of a bridge, or the design of a new airport building took pride of place.

With other departments it was much the same, it was their work that mattered, and up to now politics had made little impact on them. They accepted the fact that Ministers were responsible for policy and that these same Ministers had the right to inspect and comment on the work of their departments. But now that ministries more on the European model were to be set up, it

seemed to them that they were about to be subjected to political interference in professional matters and in the control of their staff. And, an added outrage, Administrative Officers were apparently to be placed in authority over them in the guise of Permanent Secretaries. Why should not the heads of departments, themselves, be the Permanent Secretaries? But this Ministers would not accept under any circumstances. They saw no virtue in going into orbit round heads of departments, some of whom had, as they saw it, scarcely recognized their existence during the past two years. They insisted on having their Permanent Secretaries appointed from the ranks of the administration. They wanted men who understood political issues and who "talked their language." The constitution now said that they were to be in charge of their departments. Nothing less would do.

I could, of course, have forced the issue. But this would have helped nobody. The result would have been a crop of resignations and applications for transfer to other territories on the part of the very men on whom we relied to create and man our new regional public service. Expansion and increased efficiency were what we needed, not a breakdown. Indeed, I felt much sympathy for senior departmental officers who had served for long years working their way up the ladder of promotion only to find, now that they had reached the topmost rungs, that the cup of executive responsibility was to be dashed from their lips. But the hard realities of nationalist politics had to be faced.

A compromise formula was necessary that would invest Ministers with the status that they expected vis-à-vis their departments and, at the same time, allay the anxieties of the senior officers of those departments. Unhappily a deep gulf of suspicion lay between the two sides. Ministers were quite unable to understand the independent outlook and professional pride of the departmental officer, which they interpreted as little better than a determination to cling to power. The departmental heads, on the other hand, could not appreciate the deep sense of frustration of the Ministers who felt that they were being deprived of their constitutional rights and that they were being belittled in the eyes of their supporters. There was, finally, a lurking suspicion in certain of the larger departments that the whole business was an astute

move on the part of the administration to secure for its officers a greater share of highly paid posts.

Nothing could have been further from the truth, for the staffing of the provinces was problem enough without the additional task of finding suitable men for the ministries. Little more than a score of our two hundred or so D.O.'s and A.D.O.'s had more than seven years' service, and we used to reckon that ten years' experience was needed before a D.O. could be placed in charge of a large division. This could no longer be. Fortunately, the quality of the postwar entry was so high that we could take risks, though not to the extent of robbing the provinces of too many of their best men.

After a series of meetings with departmental heads I evolved a compromise formula defining the status and powers of Permanent Secretaries agreeable, as a temporary measure, to Ministers. Departmental heads accepted this, and for the next two years the compromise was to work in accordance with the temperament and outlook of individual Ministers, heads of departments, and Permanent Secretaries.

A fruitful source of friction was dilatoriness in certain departments in putting into effect what was termed the "Northernization Policy." Political parties in the South had for long pressed for the wholesale replacement throughout the country of British officials by Nigerians, but Northern leaders claimed that this "Nigerianization" would mean "Southernization," and they would have none of it. "How would you feel," one of them told a visiting journalist, "if your Civil Service, your railways, your post and telegraph offices and your electricity undertakings were exclusively manned by foreigners? We must train our own people, and when we have trained them, we must be sure that the posts they should fill are not already in the hands of Southerners."

They therefore insisted that, in future, posts requiring no particular qualifications must be the exclusive preserve of their own people. Other posts requiring special qualifications must only be filled from outside when no Northerner in any way suitable was available, and any importations must, if possible, come from Britain or from other foreign countries, for they would in due course return to their homeland. Only if there was no alternative

source of supply would they be recruited from the Eastern or Western Regions.

Not unexpectedly there were many attempts to exploit the Northernization Policy, and Ministers were under pressure from their own backbenchers in the House of Assembly, and from outside the House, to replace their "alien" civil servants wholesale from an apparently inexhaustible though purely hypothetical pool of "deserving Northerners." But to their credit the pressure was resisted, and Sardauna made it clear that "being a Northerner is not a qualification"; genuine applicants must prove themselves fit for employment. Opportunities for training in the region and overseas would be provided. In the same way Makama set his face against any debasement of educational standards. To this far-sightedness the region was to owe its freedom from student politics of the type that had from time to time created confusion in certain other newly independent countries.

III

The new order of things had a considerable impact on our private lives. Government Lodge was now "Government House," and the pressure of official entertainment, already severe, rapidly grew, as did the flow of visitors from abroad. My wife at this time was in England settling into the house that we had recently bought at Hythe in Kent, and so my daughter Sarah, now twenty-two and making her first visit to Nigeria, found herself, after only five weeks in the country, in sole charge as hostess.

As in 1952, our first visitor of consequence was the Secretary of State, this time Lennox Boyd, later Lord Boyd. Accompanying him was Tom Williamson, recently made responsible for Nigerian affairs at the Colonial Office. The new Secretary of State was accepted as a friend by all the Northern leaders whom he met with the same spontaneity that they had shown toward his predecessor. Though they differed greatly in temperament, they were both very tall men and both had that gift of humor without which no one, however well intentioned, can ever hope to reach the heart of a laughter-loving race.

Alan Lennox Boyd had the reputation of being the first Secre-

tary of State for the Colonies who had accepted his present post, not as a steppingstone to some other ministry, but because he preferred it to all others. Generous hearted in all things, he soon made us feel that our worries were his worries and our enthusiasms were his enthusiasms. Here, we felt with relief, was a Colonial Secretary whose judgments would be based on human understanding. There had been too many textbook theorists among our visitors.

Tom Williamson, by now one of the "family," was another of our visitors from overseas in whom there was to be born a sense of personal involvement in Nigeria's destiny. Colonial Office officials as a whole, even when they knew the personalities involved, seemed to treat their problems with clinical detachment. This is, possibly, not remarkable, but in situations where emotions carry more weight than logic, warmth of understanding need not imply impartiality, and Tom Williamson, being an exception to the general rule, was liked and trusted the more.

Our next visitor of note was Margery Perham, whose coming I had long awaited. I had more than once urged her to come back again to the North, hoping to overcome her impression that little had stirred in the region since Sir Donald Cameron's Governorship of Nigeria twenty years earlier. The good will of so well known an authority on African administration should be of the greatest value to those of us who were unhappy about the image still presented by the North in liberal circles in Britain.

Next came David Williams of *West Africa*. Some writers and journalists avoided staying with officials, preferring complete liberty of action, but David Williams knew perfectly well that as far as I was concerned he could go where he liked and see what he pleased. By now his knowledge of West African politics and personalities was becoming encyclopedic. It had been through his good offices that I was able to make my first attempt to bring about the launching of an independent daily newspaper in the North. We badly needed a paper that would reflect progressive opinion in the Region and present that opinion to a far wider public than was reached by our solitary English-language paper, the government-subsidized weekly *Nigerian Citizen*.

Some years earlier the Daily Mirror Group which owned *West*

Africa had taken over the *Lagos Daily Times*, and it occurred to me that the same group might consider publishing a paper in the North as a new venture. So, hearing from David Williams that Cecil King, then chairman of the group, was touring West Africa, I invited him to stay in Kaduna. On the evening of his arrival I asked leading Northern Ministers to dinner, trusting that he might be the more disposed to help once he had heard how strongly they felt the lack of any means of replying to what they were convinced was the deliberate misrepresentation by the *Lagos* press of their government's policies and of day-to-day events in the region.

Next morning I made my case. But I was at once firmly brought face to face with the harsh realities of newspaper finance. Northern-born journalists could be trained in Lagos and a Northern edition of the *Lagos Times* could be brought out featuring local news and photographs. Anything beyond this was economically out of the question. This, I feared, would not suffice. Northern claims that the *Lagos* press was biased were borne out by facts, and I was back where I had started.

I next tried two M.P.'s, John Tilney and William Aitken (the late Sir William Aitken), with whom when they were our guests I had discussed this very problem. Possibly other newspaper interests in Britain might move in. The excellent facilities provided by the Gaskiya Corporation would save the capital cost of plant in the experimental stage. Both made inquiries, but without success. The only alternative left to us was to see what we could do about the *Citizen*, which had lost all its sparkle since the departure of its creator Douglas Cobban, found for us originally by Bill Aitken. Now it was scrappy, unimaginative, and barely worth reading. If we could get someone really good from home and give him a free hand and a charter of independence we should be able to create a market which an independent organization might one day be tempted to take over. On this basis a scheme was drawn up and approved by Executive Council, the task of securing the key man being left to me during my forthcoming leave.

This had been in mid-1954, and thanks to Bill Aitken we got what we wanted. Douglas Cobban would come back on loan to

us for a few weeks, bringing with him Charles Sharp, a young man who had worked on an East Anglian paper and who possessed the qualities that we needed—imagination, energy, and enthusiasm. It seemed that at last we were getting somewhere.

We were not to be disappointed. Before the year was out we had an extremely lively *Citizen*, full of new features and vastly improved photographs. The circulation began to soar, and soon two issues were published each week. But it had not been easy. Extra staff had to be trained from scratch, and new ideas had to be put across. Charles Sharp had the right disposition for his task, and he infected all around him with his own confidence and enthusiasm. Being new to Nigeria his criticisms of government were at times off the mark, but Ministers were forbearing in their reactions, and as far as I was concerned the *Citizen* could bite the hand that fed it as often as its manager liked, so long as he did nothing too outrageous. The more independent its attitude the more its views would be respected, and the more racy its style the better for its circulation.

I wish I could conclude the story by recording success in the final objective, the launching of a self-supporting daily. But the problems of distribution in the provinces proved too great. The new *Citizen* justified itself as far as it went, but it did not provoke that revolution in public reading for which we had hoped.¹

In February, 1955, Sir John and Lady Macpherson came North on their farewell visit. This for my wife and myself was a sad occasion. I should always remember Jock Macpherson's encouragement during my years in Sokoto and in Kano and his patience and good humor when, goaded by an overmastering sense of urgency, I was at my most fractious. Later, when I had moved to Kaduna, he had given me the same encouragement and, in the knowledge that I should always keep him in close touch with events and with my intentions, a completely free hand. No one could ask for more.

He felt at times, I am sure, that my devotion lay more with the North than with the Nigeria that was so much his monument. Also being, as he termed it, a "conciliar animal," he was, I think,

1. But it was not to end like that. A few years after independence Charles Sharp was invited back to the North to become managing director of what is now New Nigerian Newspapers Ltd., which publishes amongst other matter a first class daily, the *New Nigerian*, whose editor is Adamu Chiroma.

more at home in the lively, argumentative South than in the more sedate North. But he was scrupulously fair, and he realized how strongly I felt that Northern unity and self-reliance must come first. The rest, I was sure, would follow. The regions were interdependent. There could be no Nigeria without the North, and the North would in time come to see where its true destiny lay.

As a Governor, Jock Macpherson's energy had seemed inexhaustible, and his personal charm and infectious sense of humor had been a sure solvent to all but the most intractable situations. Yet beneath lay a shrewdness and a toughness that insured him universal respect. We were not to lose him entirely, for within the year we were to hear that he was to become Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies.

It has been long rumored that his successor as Governor General would be a politician, a prospect that did not at all please us. A man brought up in the orthodox ways of European-style democracy would be unlikely either to understand our unorthodox Muslim world or to appreciate the intensity of its leaders' opposition to anything that threatened their religion and institutions. It was with great relief that we learned that we were to have Sir James Robertson, whose experience of Muslims gained in the course of thirty years of service in the Sudan, "just across the way" from Bornu, would, together with his knowledge of Arabic, provide him with precisely the background that the North, in particular, would respect.

In March, Peter Scott presented his first budget under the Federal Constitution. Our estimated revenues for the forthcoming year would exceed twelve million pounds, including grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund, a sum half as great again as that for the whole of Nigeria not so very many years earlier. We could now forge ahead full bore with our development schemes. In Peter Scott the region had a Financial Secretary of outstanding gifts. Unlike many of his kind he had not come to maturity in the arid surroundings of a series of Financial Secretary's offices. An upbringing in the harsh and demanding atmosphere of the border provinces of the region had taught him how the people lived and the problems with which they had to contend. To me he was invaluable. Finance and economics were

not subjects in which I could claim any expertise, and provided that what he recommended made hard sense I was content to trust his judgment. Widely read, he was a most entertaining companion and had a pretty wit. But he was not a fit man. Diabetes had long troubled him, and he spoke his mind with a freedom that was not always wise, particularly in the House of Assembly. Herein lay his tragedy, for Northern Nigeria was his life, and two years later Northern Nigeria was to reject him.

During the course of the previous year, anticipating events, we had laid the foundations of a number of projects, the new *Citizen*, to which I have already referred, among them. The first to bear visible fruit was our plan for a regional air service. Distance had always been one of the greatest enemies to progress in the North, and now, when the rural backwaters of the past were fast becoming flourishing centers of development, it was intolerable that journeys that could be performed within a few hours by air still involved days of tedious travel by rail or launch or road. Ministers and senior officials must be made more mobile.

We began by clearing sites for airstrips in the more remote parts of the region and by drawing up a scheme for the creation of a Northern Region Communications Flight with its own aircraft, pilots, and ground staff. We then tackled Lagos, for civil aviation was a federal subject; but with Abubakar as Federal Minister of Transport and with Eric Coleman, the Director of Civil Aviation, an enthusiastic ally, the way ahead was soon clear. By early May our first aircraft, an Auster, and our first pilot had arrived, and flying began. I do not remember who was the first passenger. It was probably Sardauna, for he was a "fan" from the start and entirely without fear whatever the weather and however uninviting the terrain below.

Major projects apart, in every one of the twelve provinces exciting things were now happening. Regional autonomy in an age of expansion was providing opportunities for men of enterprise and imagination that would never have come their way under the old centralized system. In the remote Bauchi bush where, for six months of the year, neither man nor beast could survive for lack of water, bulldozers were gouging out a series of miniature lakes. At Makurdi, on the Benue, in a drive to revive the river

trade now stagnant for many years, experimental barges, tugs, ferries, and smaller craft were being constructed in a government boat yard, the first of its kind in the North. On the western flank of the region, around and below Birnin Kebbi, those unforgettable myriads of malaria-infected mosquitoes that annually plagued the peasantry were now undergoing ordeal by insecticide over an area of six hundred square miles. Meat was being canned in Kano; at Panyam on the Plateau, a fish farm, one of the largest in Africa, was in production; a huge textile mill was about to go up in Kaduna; and even the new public buildings that were springing up all over the region pleased the eye and stimulated the imagination as they had never done in the past.

Not all our numerous undertakings were to be as successful as we would have wished, but lessons learned were put to good effect and the forward momentum continued. All this despite a continuing shortage of doctors, engineers, agriculturists, and other skilled staff, which now amounted to five hundred unfilled vacancies in the principle departments of government alone.

In an attempt to break this deadlock I commissioned a booklet that would combine a vivid description of Northern Nigeria's past and its present attractions with an appeal for recruits to its Public Service. *This Is Northern Nigeria*, written by Tony Kirk-Greene, a young A.D.O. with a literary future, had an immediate impact in the circles we wished to reach in the United Kingdom where it was widely circulated. John Hindle, who had illustrated it and launched it, was now director of a greatly expanded Information Service which already had its own film unit and a fleet of mobile cinemas which could now penetrate to every corner of the region. For the rural population the day of awakening had now arrived. Whether they liked it or not, and the majority did not, democracy was on the doorstep. A stream of posters and pamphlets, films and filmstrips now told them about the new world to which they were heir and the part that they should play in it. The treatment was brash and brutal, but only constant hammering at the doors of ignorance could help to preserve them from exploitation and encourage them to use the opportunities now offered. And it was the business of the Government Information Service to anticipate less altruistically minded agencies by wielding the hammer itself.



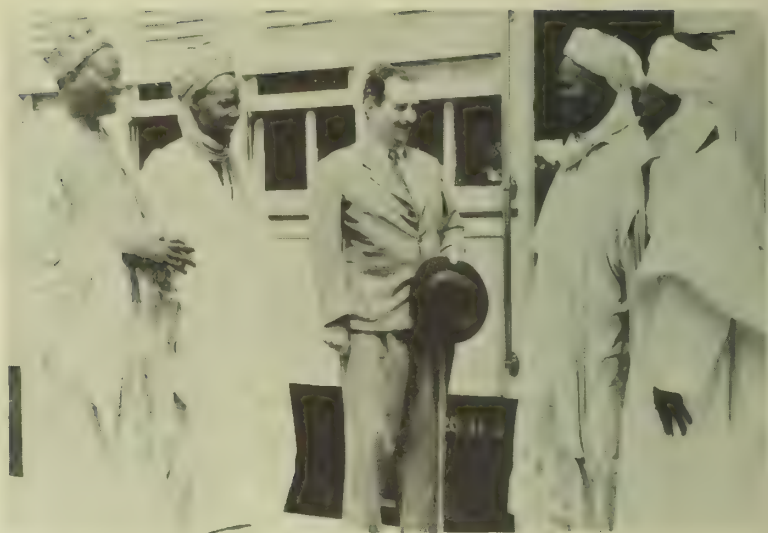
1. The author's bush house at Mamfe,
1921.

2. The author, Bamenda, 1924. The spear
was the universal walking stick of
the hill peoples.



3. Training drive for apprentice Bornu
Native Administration drivers, 1927.
Tony Shillingford and E. J. H. Bowler
of the Education Department standing in
front of Rabeh's original fort.



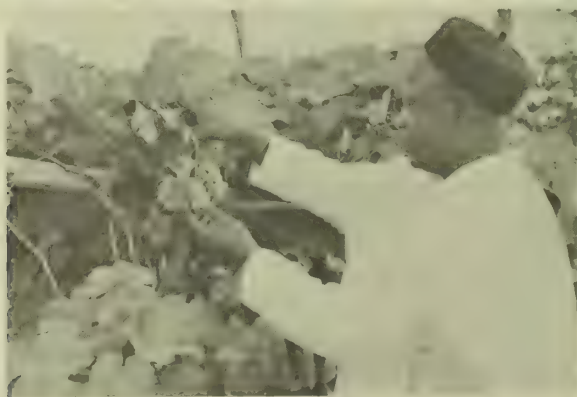


4. Regional Ministers, Kaduna Railway Station, 1952. Left to right, Peter Achimugu, Bello Kano, Sir Bryan Sharwood Smith, Sardauna, Makaman Bida.



5. Muhammedu Sanusi, Emir of Kano, on the occasion of his installation, 1954.

6. Abubakar Imam, editor of *Gaskiya*.





7. Sardauna's guest at an evening reception.

8. The Sardauna of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, and
Sir Bryan Sharwood Smith, 1954.





9. Government House, Kaduna.

10. Royal Visit, 1956. The Queen and Prince Philip arrive at Kano, met by Sir Bryan Sharwood Smith and Sardauna, then Premier of Northern Nigeria.

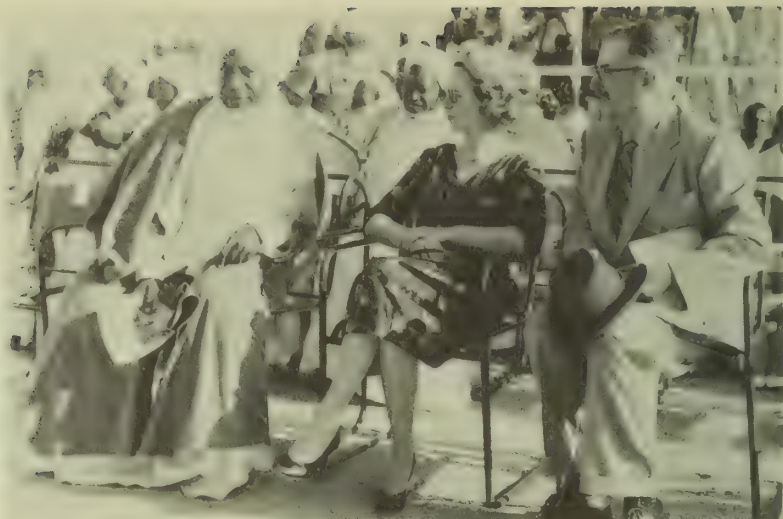




11. The Emir of Kano greets Mr. Alan Lennox Boyd (Later Lord Boyd), Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Lady Patricia Lennox Boyd, Kano, 1957.



12. Northern self-government celebrations, 1959. Left to right, Lady Sharwood Smith, Sir John Patterson, Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces, 1943-1948, Sir Eric Thompstone, Chief Commissioner, 1948-1951, and Sir Bryan Sharwood Smith.

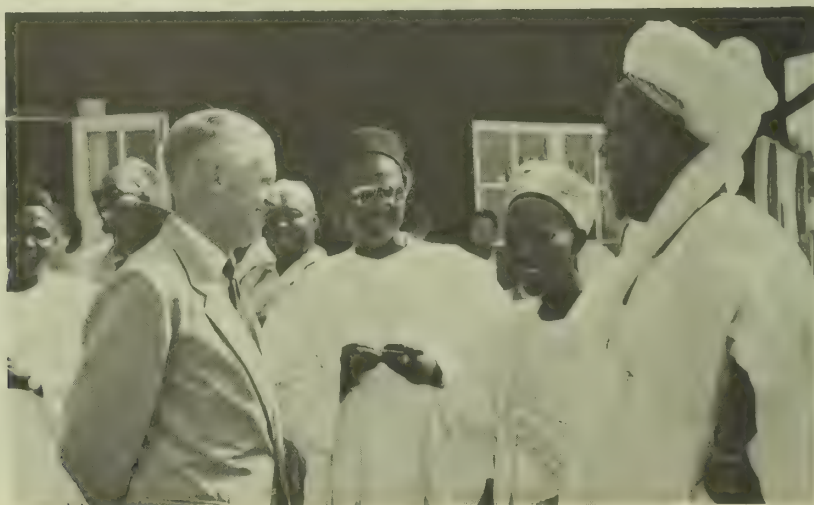


13. Northern self-government celebrations, 1959. Sir Bryan and Lady Sharwood Smith with the Sultan of Sokoto.



14. Lady Sharwood Smith, Regional president of the Red Cross.

15. K. P. Maddocks, Civil Secretary and Deputy Governor, with Northern Ministers, Isa Kaita, Makaman Bida, and Sardauna.





16. Hedley Marshall showing the Governor, Sir Kashim Ibrahim (the former Shettima Kashim) around the Attorney General's chambers, 1962.

17. Kano. Left foreground, gateway to the Emir's Palace. Background, the Central Offices and Native Treasury, with the city beyond.





18. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa greets Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. Sir James and Lady Robertson in the background.

19. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Princess Alexandra during the independence celebrations, 1960.



CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS IN CONFLICT

1955-1956

I

From 1952 to 1954 the social and economic needs of the region had been pre-eminent in everybody's minds, and our course had been clear. But politics had now begun to take the upper hand, and we were moving into uncharted seas. Of the non-Muslim third of the region's population a goodly proportion were the descendants of men and women who, before the advent of the British, had lived in constant fear of death or enslavement by the very ancestors of the men who, today, largely controlled the region's destinies. Only the creation of a separate region which they, not the Muslims, would dominate would, in their leaders' view, allay their fears.

Sardauna and Makama, in particular, realizing that "One North, One People" must be more than a convenient party slogan, had done much to gain non-Muslim co-operation. But there was a very great deal on the debit side. The occasional hot-tempered insult or threat at a political meeting—one of Sardauna's Ministers was an outstanding offender—undid most of the good done. And to cap everything, Sardauna himself, in one of those disastrous and utterly unpredictable outbursts to which he was prone, had produced the greatest shock of all.

The incident took place in the House of Assembly during the budget meeting. The offending passage, as recorded in Hansard ran as follows:

When the foundation stone of the Northern Region was laid before the British came, there was no question of bribery [*sic*]. The right traditions that we have gone away from are the cutting of the hands of thieves, and that has caused a lot of thieving in this country. Why

should we not be cutting the hands of thieves in order to reduce thieving? That is logical and it is lawful in our own tradition and custom here. As regards slaves, it is only because the Moslem power is not strong here that we have not got the slaves to sell.¹

Then, under his breath and widely heard, though not quoted, "Suna nan kuwa" (And they're here allright).

Those of us who knew Sardauna were able to assess this *gaffe* at its true worth. But it was episodes like this that conjured up in the minds of many non-Muslims visions of a return to the dark days of the last century once the British had left. It also shocked a large number of Muslims.

In the Muslim emirates, too, there was uncertainty as to the future. In the past, power and influence had rested with the chiefs, behind whom stood the overwhelming mass of the population. Now, on the face of things, power had passed from the chiefs to the representatives of the new educated classes who dominated our House of Assembly and the Northern benches in the House of Representatives. But appearances were deceptive. Although the NPC had branches in nearly every sizable town in the region, except where non-Muslim influence predominated, it possessed, as yet, very little in the way of party funds, no newspaper, and only a handful of salaried party officials. Its true strength lay in the tacit support of the chiefs and the old ruling classes, to whom it represented stability and moderation and a bulwark against the threat of Ibo domination. And behind the chiefs there still stood the mass of the people.

The hard core of the NPC, that is to say the founder members and those sections of the community, men of education and men with a stake in the country, who had first rallied to its banners, could not have totaled much more than a thousand. By now, of course, the party had vastly increased its membership, but a great number of the more recent recruits were of a very different caliber. Many were young men of limited education who saw more profit for themselves in militant politics than in earning a steady living. These young men were already beginning to cause trouble in the provinces.

As the years passed and more and more young people com-

1. *Northern Region of Nigeria, House of Assembly Debates*, March, 1955, p. 6.

pleted their education and their training, the ranks of the new microscopically small "middle class" would rapidly swell. In, say, ten years' time its members should if all went well be able to exercise a decisive influence in the region without depending on either the reactionary right or the radical left. Equally, by that time, the spread of primary education, familiarity with the ballot box, and experience in local government would, we hoped, have armored the mass of the population against exploitation by a political oligarchy or a dictator disguised as a democrat. But it was the discouraging possibilities that lay immediately ahead that must be faced. How was regional unity to be insured? How could class conflict and communal disorders be avoided? It seemed to me that only by studying what had happened in other territories under comparable circumstances should we be able to see our own problems in clear perspective. As a government we ought to be able to anticipate the course of events, instead of finding ourselves overtaken while still unready.

With these thoughts in mind I had sought, some while ago, for precedents. What had happened in Iraq, Burma, and Libya in the years immediately before and after independence? And how, in an entirely different context, had the peoples of Liberia fared in recent times? Papers covering these matters had been prepared by two District Officers, Douglas Pott and F. D. K. Williams, during the course of their leave in London for circulation in the region.

Later, still not satisfied, I found my thoughts straying to the India that had so absorbed me in my early years. Surely here was a treasure house of experience that we in Africa had long neglected. Philip Mason's classic study of *The Men Who Ruled India* had only recently been published, and within the pages of this fascinating book in particular I found much of what I sought. The similarity between conditions in Northern Nigeria and in much of northern India was almost uncanny, though in India everything had been on a far vaster scale and had covered a far longer span of years. Nevertheless, it was all there, the early years of road-making and tree-planting by successive generations of D.O.'s, the corruption and the court intrigue, the banditry, the food shortages, the epidemics, even the smell of wood smoke on a clear,

crisp "cold weather" morning. Then, more apposite to present needs, political awakening with its consequent clash of interests, and communal rioting on a scale that made the Kano riots seem little more than a scuffle, bloody and disheartening though they had been. And, by that time, dealing with the disorders, with the famine, with the crime and corruption, Indian magistrates and Indian administrators, working with their British colleagues as members of the Service that they were about to inherit.

Indeed, no one in a position of responsibility in Northern Nigeria who read the two volumes of this remarkable book could fail to see his problems in clearer perspective and with renewed courage. They should, had it only been possible, have been prescribed reading for all senior officials. The best that I could do was to have them issued to provincial libraries with a recommendation.

This, though the most rewarding, was only one of the many books on India that I read at this time. All in all, they were to provide me with a more balanced outlook on Nigerian problems and a source of inspiration when worried or perplexed during the months to come.

II

My fears that trouble lay ahead were to prove only too well founded, for as the year advanced, reports began to come in from the provinces suggesting that the more militant members of the NPC were getting out of hand. Even in Kaduna there was an unmistakable change in atmosphere.

Although Ministers had, at the Constitutional Conference, decided that the time was not yet ripe for the replacement of the Civil Secretary and the Financial Secretary, the continued presence of these two influential British officials in their midst appeared, at times, to irk them in their hearts. On the other hand, they had no reservations about Hedley Marshall. There were no Northern lawyers, and they could not replace him. Indeed, he was to become almost an institution with them. Seven years later he was still there, eventually to be replaced by another British Attorney General. But, despite occasional clashes, Ministers, I

know, realized that in K. P. Maddocks, Hedley, and Peter Scott, they had an outstanding team. Each one was an expert in his own particular field. No region, and no Governor, could have been better served.

Sardauna had by now been Premier or leading Minister for more than three years. During this time he had greatly enhanced his reputation as an able and forceful administrator. By sheer physical presence and personal charm he had built himself a position in the region that was all but unassailable, but for two things. In the first place, his interests were limited. He would, for instance, have been entirely out of his depth in Abubakar's place in Lagos. Indeed, it would have been fair to say that Nigeria outside the Northern Region barely existed for him except insofar as its leaders' actions and its day-to-day fortunes affected the North. Second, and more important, his naturally flamboyant nature had always reacted sharply to criticism or opposition. The temperamental explosions of other days, however, were singularly unsuitable in a party leader and the Premier of his region. But there was nothing that his embarrassed fellow Ministers could do about it. My own personal relations with him, on the other hand, had, apart from the occasional coolness, remained friendly. In recent weeks, however, I had not been in such close touch with him.

When I came to discuss with him the reports of trouble-making in the provinces to which I have earlier referred, he at once discounted their importance. "But surely," I had said, "it would be better to rid yourselves of these mischief-makers? You will never get unity in the region while they continue to rampage." But Sardauna would not agree. "While the wild men are on our side," he maintained, "we know where we are. If they join our enemies the trouble will be worse."

Demands on Sardauna's time at this period were unceasing, and, in addition, I felt that a number of unpleasant facts were being kept from him. For my part, I was far from happy at the way things were going. I believed that our sources of information were reliable.

Our security organization, built up by Victor Collison and perfected by Maurice Bennion and Trevor Clarke, was as near

perfect as we could make it. With the dire examples provided by certain other colonial territories since the war, we should have been guilty of crass folly had it been not so. In every one of the twelve provinces the ingredients existed for outbursts of communal trouble, and in every one violence would occur from time to time. Whether the causes were racial, religious, or political, it was essential that we should have as much prior warning as possible in order to contain each outburst before it spread. Every month informal reports came from Residents and from all the thirty-six divisions, each one of which at once appeared upon my desk. Should an emergency arise in any province, however remote, we could maintain touch through a wireless network, operated by the police.

While the administration was responsible for the provinces, the Special Branch of the Nigeria Police concentrated mostly on politico-criminal activities in the big cities. Liaison between us was excellent, and John O'Sullivan, the head of the Special Branch in the North, came regularly to see us. He was a master of his trade. There was little of note that happened in Kano, Kaduna, Jos, or other centers, the essential details of which he did not know within twenty-four hours. His dry Irish humor and his astringent comments on people and events were a constant tonic.

All these activities took place in a new building adjoining the Executive Council Chamber. In it was housed the staff of the newly created Governor's Office which, in addition to security, handled Executive Council affairs and communications. Now that we were in direct relationship with the Colonial Office a constant stream of correspondence flowed or flashed by code and cypher and diplomatic bag to and from London and Lagos and the other two regional capitals. The building also housed the staff of our Communications Flight.

Realizing that Ministers might suspect that some grisly, Gestapo-like organization was operating within a stone's throw of their council chamber, I was at pains to explain that its sole object was the security of the region and that this affected them, as members of the government, as much as it did me. Information, unless analyzed and recorded, was largely valueless, and I explained to them the basic principles on which an intelligence sys-

tem worked. Before long they would be taking over what we had built up.

The efficiency of our organization in the provinces depended, of course, mainly on the alertness and astuteness of individual D.O.'s. When, a very rare occurrence, a "Nil Report" came in, the officer concerned was earmarked for an early change of scene. We could not take risks. With the whole country in a state of social and political ferment, there was no area where universal peace and contentment reigned. Thanks to this organization, which visiting experts were kind enough to say was as good as they had encountered anywhere, we slept the sounder, though those who ran it went short of sleep when there was trouble in the air.

III

In June matters came to a head. One evening the Sultan telephoned. He and the Emirs of Kano and Zaria would like to come and see me on a matter of urgency after the evening prayer. After the customary exchange of greetings, the Sultan, speaking with an emotion unusual for him, began by saying that he and his brother chiefs on the Executive Council had, during recent weeks, felt that their position was becoming intolerable. As members of the government they were answerable to their brother chiefs and, even more so, to their own people. Ministers now made decisions in matters that concerned the chiefs directly without consulting them.

There were, furthermore, a lot of new men in the NPC in the provinces who had begun to interfere, in the name of the party, in the internal affairs of the native administrations and in other matters that were not their concern. Instances were quoted of their attempting to intimidate native courts in cases where they or their friends were concerned. Again, pressure had been brought on certain lesser chiefs to contribute to "party funds" or risk being discredited or even deposed in favor of some other claimant who would pay for support. The Emir of Kano then took up the tale, condemning recent virulent attacks by *Mahaukata* leaders on British officials who, because of their impartiality,

had earned the disapproval of party firebrands. Furthermore, he claimed, new attempts were being made in Kano to inflame feeling against the Southerners and also the Syrians and Lebanese whose presence was essential to the commerce of the city. Finally, the Emir of Zaria quoted instances of interference in religious matters.

Summing up, the Sultan said that while they sympathized with the NPC leaders' main aims, recent events brought discredit on the region. As members of the government they shared the responsibility. They felt that they could not continue in this way. What could they do? Could they resign? I said in reply that, if they insisted, they could resign, but I felt that such a step would split the North wide open. Ministerial government had come to stay, and for the sake of the region, chiefs and political leaders must learn to live together. Better far that they should keep their counsel until I had spoken with Sardauna. To this the Sultan and his companions agreed.

A great deal of what the three chiefs had said was perfectly true. Most if it coincided with my own information. Yet, I also realized that, however well founded their complaints, their feelings were exacerbated by the growing power and influence of Ministers. But this, as I had told them, was something to which they must accommodate themselves.

On the following morning I put the whole case to Sardauna. He listened without comment, but he was plainly upset. Next day he returned. By now the cat was well among the pigeons, and Kaduna was abuzz with angry talk. He suggested that the Sultan should call a meeting of all the more influential chiefs, together with a number of minor chiefs, from all provinces. Grievances could then be voiced, and Ministers would explain their own positions and try to put matters right.

To this the Sultan readily agreed. But when the time came to discuss details, it became at once clear to me that Ministers intended to take charge from the start. My own idea had been to open the meeting myself, quite briefly and formally, in accordance with my special responsibility for chiefly matters. I would then leave the chiefs to talk things over until they were ready for Ministers to join them. Unless this course was followed I knew ex-

actly what would happen. The Sultan, by temperament and because of his status as a religious leader, greatly disliked being involved in public controversy. The Ministers would do all the talking, he would remain silent. And no other single chief, however strongly he felt, would raise his voice to challenge what the Sultan had appeared to accept. We should then be back where we started. The issue, however, was far too important to be shelved. The chiefs must be allowed to have their say. They had their responsibilities, the politicians had theirs. There was no necessity for the two to clash.

To me the danger seemed obvious, but the Ministers, when we met in my office to decide procedure, would not agree. Undoubtedly, some of them thought that I was deliberately putting the chiefs against them, whereas the precise reverse was the case. Perhaps, too, lulled by their overwhelming majority in the legislatures, they had deluded themselves as to the true nature and extent of their support among the people of the region as a whole. This was to be clearly illustrated in the regional elections that were to take place in the following year. When the traditionalists in Zaria, with the covert support of the Emir, put up their own candidate in opposition to Turaki, the NPC nominee, the NPC vote, in what should have been a safe seat, was so badly split that the NEPU candidate got in, and the region lost one of the best of its Ministers.

But, as I tried to make clear at the time, this for me was in no sense a matter of party politics. I was trying to prevent an outright clash between the traditionalists and the progressives who together made up the bulk of the region, a clash from which the extremists at either end would joyfully profit. I was convinced that the assembled chiefs must be given the opportunity of voicing their doubts and grievances freely among themselves. Should this opportunity be denied, then the trouble would be driven underground only to burst out violently at some future date.

But it was no good. Sardauna and his Ministers remained convinced that all that was needed was explanations. They wished to control proceedings from the start, and our meeting came to an end in an atmosphere of anger and frustration. When the Ministers took their departure, the last to leave the room was

Turaki. As he passed me he gave me a friendly grin. Here was at least one Minister who bore no ill feelings.

And with this crumb of comfort I entrained for Kano, where I was to present the Emir of Kano with the insignia of the C.M.G. which he had been awarded in the New Year's Honours. On the following morning, as we rode in procession from the Nassarawa Gate to the open space in front of the palace where the ceremony would be held, the wild enthusiasm of the crowd that packed the streets and housetops bore unmistakable testimony of his popularity and, incidentally, underlined the validity of my arguments of the previous day. But there was little solace in feeling that I was in the right. This was the first crisis of confidence that had arisen between myself and Ministers with whom I had always been on terms of friendship, and that afternoon, as I prepared my report on events for London and Lagos, a wave of depression came over me.

Later in the evening, however, there came a gleam of hope. The telephone rang. I was wanted from Kaduna. One of the Northern Federal Ministers was on the line. They had arrived in Kaduna on the day of my departure for Kano. There had been consultations, and Sardauna and his colleagues were now more inclined to accept my suggestions. Abubakar wished to speak to me about it as soon as I returned.

My relief was great, and my meeting later with Abubakar was to deepen my admiration for him and my gratitude for his support. He came to the point at once. He said, "Ribadu and I have been talking to the Regional Ministers. We have told them that we do not believe that the Governor is trying to cause trouble between chiefs and Ministers. We think that he is right and that he is trying to hold the region together, whereas some of your followers are doing the opposite." He then proceeded to read me a lecture, saying: "Sardauna is subjected to far more pressure from irresponsible people than you realize. He has been having a very difficult time. You have lost touch with each other. You must see him, if possible, every day and talk things over together. When you cannot see him you must telephone him. He will ring you up shortly and ask for an appointment. When you meet you must do everything you can to restore your old relationship." As I lis-

tened I had to admit to myself that Abubakar's reproaches were in some degree justified. There had been a loss of personal contact, and though this had been scarcely of my own making, I could, I suppose, have done more to bridge the gap.

The meeting with Sardauna took place later in the morning, a morning that I still vividly remember. I do not know what Abubakar had said to him, but when he arrived he was clearly distressed. Recent events, he said, had greatly grieved him, and he felt that the fault had been his. Never would he allow such a thing to happen again. I felt much relieved, for the two of us had been through a great deal together during the previous six years, and the Sardauna that I knew was the kind of man that, even at his most intransigent, one could not but like. Before we parted we determined that there must always be the old *amana* (a combination of trust and loyalty) between us. Unhappily, this was not to be the last incident, for Sardauna was a man constantly tugged one way or the other by the two conflicting sides of his nature. But the storm never lasted. On a later occasion, when depressed and frustrated by the behavior of the less admirable among his followers, Sardauna was to go so far as to say that when I left the North he would leave politics. I am sure that for the moment he meant what he said, though he must have realized in his heart that for him there could be no retreat. Like Abubakar he was doomed to tread the path on which his feet were set for the rest of his days.

One point I had to raise. From the time that I had come to Kaduna I had made it a rule that any person who wished to see me must be permitted to do so. Whether he was a Minister with a personal worry, a Christian chief with a complaint against an NPC leader, a British official, or merely someone with a grievance, access must be allowed. Only in this way could I perform what I held to be my most important duty, the holding of the ring and the maintenance of public confidence. Sardauna, therefore, must not allow mischief-makers to plant suspicion in his mind by suggesting to him that I was entertaining intriguers. If he ever came to believe that anything I did was directed against the interests of the North and its new leaders, then my own period of usefulness

would be approaching a close. Sardauna, who himself preached and practiced accessibility, accepted the point.

The meeting of the chiefs took place later, in the manner originally planned, and the effects were to be largely as we had hoped. From now on there were to be far fewer complaints of arrogant and provocative behavior on the part of petty party officials and of attempts on their part to usurp the functions of the chiefs and of the courts.

A few weeks later Sardauna, with several companions, departed on the Holy Pilgrimage, a spiritual experience that was, for a while, to affect his whole outlook. Earlier, he had visited Tripoli and Cairo on his way to Saudi Arabia to press for better arrangements for pilgrims. Everywhere he went he had been nobly entertained. Accompanying him were the Emir of Kano and Musa Gashash, a Kano businessman and a future Minister, the first of his persuasion to be admitted into a circle hitherto largely the preserve of the Fulani and Kanuri aristocracy.

When he returned he was his old friendly self. As a memento of his Arabian journey he brought for us a tray. This tray is still in use today, and a curved dagger, which he was to give us on his return from the following year's Pilgrimage, now hangs on my study wall.

IV

In April, T. A. Brown, later Sir Algernon, our Chief Justice designate, had arrived. The regional High Court itself would not come into operation before the end of the year, the Regional High Court Law must first be drafted and passed by the legislature. Meanwhile, our future Chief Justice was carrying out a series of visits to all parts of the region. As a puisne judge in Singapore and as a soldier in Muslim India many years earlier Algy Brown had the right sort of background for the difficult role that he was about to play. Furthermore, as a former cavalry officer with a passion for polo, he was doubly welcome in this land of horsemen.

The region's first impressions of him could scarcely have been more favorable. The spectacle of a British High Court judge, who apparently saw nothing wrong in traveling in a Land

Rover, seated under a giant shade tree in some remote Bornu or Sokoto town discussing points of law with a graybearded Alkali and his muftai was sufficiently novel to be almost startling. The story soon spread, too, that the new *Chiefjoji*, to use the Hausa term, treated the alkalai as his legal brothers and held that their courts and his were complementary parts of the same system. Trouble lay ahead, but Algy Brown had undoubtedly won the first round in his fight to re-establish public confidence in British courts of law.

Meanwhile, in an entirely different sphere, the regional government had decided to establish an office in London with Tukur Yauri as the first Commissioner and Frank Humphreys, now retired from Bornu, as his Secretary. Tukur, at that time Clerk to the House of Chiefs, was a particularly happy choice, for he already knew London well and his poise and natural charm would insure him a successful mission. But before he could take up his appointment, his father, the Emir Abdullahi, died, and Tukur found himself called upon to succeed. Only a month previously we had flown to Yelwa and to Kontagora, and it had then been plain that, in the case of both chiefs, the long years of constant overwork were already beginning to tell. Both were showing marked signs of heart strain. But it was Emir Abdullahi of Yauri who was to leave us first. A great character and an outstanding administrator, I had never heard a word said against him. And so yet another link with my D.O. days of the early thirties had been severed.

In Tukur's place Sardauna suggested Abdul Maliki, son of the former Chief of Igbirra in Kabba Province. Abdul Maliki, too, had charm and poise though he was more reserved by nature than Tukur. There was a calm friendliness to him that nothing seemed to ruffle, and he was an able and experienced administrator.

Scarcely could he have imagined, when he left Kaduna to take up his appointment, that one of his first duties would be to assist with preparations, at the London end, for a Royal Visit to Nigeria. But so it was to be. A few weeks later, when I myself left Nigeria on leave, it was in the knowledge, not yet public, that the Queen would almost certainly be visiting Lagos and all three regional capitals in the new year.

THE COMING OF THE QUEEN

1956

I

On reaching London we were told that the Queen and Prince Philip would arrive in Nigeria toward the end of January. The news, however, was not at once made public. The home government doubtless had its reasons, but as time slipped by without an announcement, we became increasingly anxious. Three months' grace, which was all that we were to be afforded, was too little by far in which to stage a reception that would reflect the true image of so large and varied a territory.

When the news finally broke there was widespread delight throughout the country. A political truce was agreed by the leaders of all parties, which was to be faithfully observed throughout. Even the extremists, who were normally a law unto themselves, lay low. All men's minds were directed to one end, the forthcoming pageantry and the part that their own community would play in it.

The Royal Visit could not have come at a better time. For more than two years now, political leaders throughout the country had been angrily bickering as they maneuvered for positions of advantage. What Nigeria most lacked was some unifying force that would call a halt to discord and inspire all persons, irrespective of tribe or party, to take pride in themselves as Nigerians. Now would be their opportunity to show how far they had advanced toward nationhood. The eyes of the world would be on them, for this would be the first Royal Tour of any one of Britain's colonial territories in Africa.

For us in the North the problem would be especially acute. Plainly the Queen would be unable, in the three days allotted, to tour the region. The region must therefore come to Kaduna, an

undertaking that would require all the talent and energy that we could muster. Our twelve provinces covered an area four times that of either of the other two regions, and time was very short indeed.

When the visit had first been mooted my mind had gone back to that April morning in Sokoto seven years previously when Sir John Macpherson, speaking with special knowledge, had said that he hoped that before long the King would see a Northern Durbār. But it was not to be, if for no other reason than conviction on the part of His Majesty's Ministers that conditions in Nigeria were not yet favorable. Now the way lay open to us.

Meanwhile, Conrad Williams, who was acting for me in Kaduna, had set up a complex organization designed to provide for every contingency. At its apex was a policy committee composed of Sardauna, leading members of Executive Council, Dominic Brown, the Brigadier commanding in Kaduna, and Alan Peebles, the Commissioner of Police. At the operational end was a hand-picked team of D.O.'s, engineers, and other specialists. To lead them I chose Bruce Greatbatch, who, as I knew well from Sokoto days, possessed precisely the right temperament and an inexhaustible supply of energy.

Meanwhile, we could put to good purpose the coincidence of our presence in London, and meetings with Sir Michael Adeane and other members of the Royal Household followed. During the course of these much of the detail affecting the Northern Region was covered. One incident stands out in my mind. We were discussing the final day of the visit, on which the Queen and Prince Philip would drive through Kano city. I was insisting that eight miles an hour, the accepted speed on such occasions, would be too slow for the narrow, crowded streets. Kano crowds were notoriously excitable, and they might, in their exuberance, block the Royal car's passage if they were given time. Adeane brought the argument firmly to an end by saying, "The Queen likes to see and be seen by her people. Whatever you may say, or whatever I may say, if she wishes to drive at eight miles an hour that is the speed at which she will drive."

Soon after this, Bruce Greatbatch flew home to let me know how things were going and to tie up loose ends in London. The

news was good. Out in the provinces, along hundreds of miles of road and track, scores of staging posts had been set up with fodder, food, and fuel dumps for the horsed contingents that the NA's were now mustering. The most distant of these would be setting out within a fortnight's time on their six weeks' journey. In the bush overlooking the Kaduna River a vast camp, over a square mile in extent with six miles of roadway, was being erected to house in plaited grass shelters the three thousand horsemen and seven thousand foot who would before long be converging on the capital. Water mains were being laid, electric light pylons were going up, loudspeakers were being fitted, medical and veterinary clinics were being built—there would even be a camp cinema.

Time was not our only enemy. The rains had come to an end two months ago, yet somehow grass must be made to grow on the dust bowl that the bulldozers had left when they completed the leveling of the assembly area for the Durbar contingents. Evening after evening batteries of sprinklers sprayed fifty thousand gallons of water over the carefully tended shoots. And throughout each day that followed, the hot sun and the dust-laden Harmattan wind together did their best to shrivel them.

On the far side of the arena, from early morning onward, masons, carpenters, painters, electricians, and workmen swarmed like ants over and around earthworks, grandstands, and the Royal Pavilion itself. At the airport, along the main routes, and in our own house and grounds the same feverish activity prevailed. For those of us who had fretted in the past at our conservative-minded, ultramethodical Public Works Department, the almost light-hearted abandon with which it now tackled the most intimidating program in its history came as a revelation.

The Northern dry season is also the season of epidemics. But in Mackenzie, our Director of Medical Services, we had an administrator of rare ability. Only those who knew the dangers realized how great was the achievement of the Health Services in safeguarding the capital from disease over this period when the greatest influx of human beings and livestock that it had ever known was straining its resources to breaking point.

But perhaps the greatest problem of all, because their be-

havior was unpredictable, would be the marshaling of the crowds throughout the period of the actual visit. And to make matters more difficult, relations between the Nigeria Police and Ministers had, in the recent past, not always been happy. Being a federal force, recruited mainly from the non-Muslim tribes of the riverine provinces where educational standards were higher, the rank and file were disinclined to treat Ministers with the same degree of awe to which they were accustomed in the emirates. There had been complaints of lack of respect and of political bias.

Our Commissioner at the time, Alan Peebles, had been specially appointed, at my request. When the post fell vacant he had been serving in the Eastern Region. He spoke Hausa fluently, and I had known him for many years, more recently in Kano, that merciless testing ground for senior police officers and administrators. The Deputy Commissioner, Rumbelow, a solid, imperturbable man, was chairman of the Royal Visit Security Subcommittee.

Police arrangements and discipline before and during the visit were admirable. But I could not accept the Security Committee's idea of three belts of concertina wire round the mile-long perimeter of Government House. It would be too reminiscent of a concentration camp. Instead, there would be one well-concealed wire barrier only, and I would ask leading chiefs if they would each let me have a dozen picked men from the ranks of their personal bodyguards who would patrol the perimeter day and night.

As the date of the Queen's arrival grew closer, problems of precedence began to loom large in my mind. Ministers were extremely sensitive about their public image. Apparent subordination to white officials, however constitutionally correct, was political gall and wormwood. This we understood, and officials, for their part, had been scrupulous in keeping in the background. But, with a Royal Visit in the offing, there must be a plan.

After much thought there came a ray of light. In England the Archbishops of Canterbury and York took pride of place. In Nigeria their counterparts as spiritual leaders would be the Sultan of Sokoto and the Shehu of Bornu. Next, on the same analogy, would come the Chief Justice, then the Premier and Executive Council in order of precedence. The Sardauna, understanding

my dilemma, accepted this, and one more possible bone of contention was, with a sigh of relief, consigned to the dustbin.

II

On the first day of February, at noon, the silver Viking bearing the Queen and Prince Philip flashed past us down the main runway of Kaduna airport to reappear later, glittering in the sunshine, as it taxied slowly toward us. As it came abreast of the long strip of red carpet which led to the Royal dais it turned and drew up. A member of the crew leapt out, the gangway was adjusted, the main door of the aircraft opened, and to the thunder of a twenty-one gun salute, the Queen, followed by Prince Philip, stepped down among us.

Drawn up nearby awaiting inspection, after the first presentations, stood a guard of honor of the First Battalion, the Nigeria Regiment, tall, powerfully-built men, superbly turned out, their crimson zouave jackets contrasting vividly with the gray-green countryside beyond. To a flank, in charge of an N.C.O., the battalion mascot, a jet-black hornbill, for once on its best behavior, stared superciliously down the length of its curved beak. After the fly past by jet bombers came the moment of departure and the five-mile drive through Kaduna to Government House.

As our Royal visitors drove slowly in an open Rolls Royce through long lines of brilliantly attired horsemen they had their first foretaste of what was to come. And those who had gathered to greet them from so many distant towns and villages caught their first glimpse of a Sovereign, who before this day had been little more than a figure in a photograph, now come radiantly to life.

Gaps had deliberately been left when preparing the official program. I had hoped, for one thing, that the Queen, after watching polo for half an hour, would agree to visit the Durbar Camp. I could think of no better way of bringing her face to face with her people. But simplicity and spontaneity were essential to success. We must have no close-packed lines of police or hordes of press photographers. There must be no forewarning, either, that might permit intruders from outside to enter the camp. Left to

themselves I felt confident that we could rely on the natural good manners and sense of occasion of even the least sophisticated contingents to do nothing that would cause embarrassment.

After lunch, on the Queen's asking, "What are we going to do this afternoon?" I made my suggestion. It was at once accepted. At the main entrance we were met by the Emir of Zaria, who administered the camp through a council drawn from all twelve provinces, for Kaduna was a part of Zaria Emirate. We then drove onward through a crowd thousands strong, already delirious with delight. Tumblers, jugglers, and clowns performed their turns with frenzied enthusiasm almost under the wheels of the slowly moving car. I myself was sitting in front next to the driver showing the way. But when we reached the far end of the camp the throng was so dense that the traffic police were swept aside, and I suddenly realized that I had overshot the turning circle and we were headed for uncleared bush. Momentarily, I pictured myself as going down to history as the Governor who lost his Sovereign. However, I found my way back by narrow side tracks, my passengers apparently quite unperturbed, to rejoin the rest of the procession. Later, the Queen and Prince Philip left the car and, walking through the delighted crowd with scarcely a policeman in sight, climbed a hillock below which the entire camp lay extended.

The following morning would be Durbar Day, and I had been under heavy pressure to ask the Queen if she would appear in full evening dress with orders and decorations as on State Occasions. But it had seemed to me to be too much to ask her to sit so attired for three long hours, part of which would be in the hot sun. However, I undertook to tell the Queen's Private Secretary how matters stood.

That evening there was a State Dinner at Government House. The seating was so arranged that opposite to the Queen and Prince Philip, flanking the Sardauna and in easy conversational range, were the principal Northern Ministers and two emirs, all of whom, on occasions such as this, were their natural charming selves, bubbling over with good humor and entirely at home. As the time approached for the Queen to rise, she turned to me and said, "What am I going to wear tomorrow?" To which I replied that

I knew the people would like to see her in a tiara and evening dress, as they pictured her from color photographs and illustrated magazines. But I had felt that it was too much to ask her to sit so attired for so long in the heat of the morning. "I do not see why I should not do it," came the immediate reply.

Much later, when it was all over, my wife and I strolled for a while on the lawn in the starlight. One by one the lights in the rooms above were dimmed. For all within, the day was ended. Out on the perimeter we could see, silhouetted against the floodlights, first one, then a second, then a third horseman from the Sultan's mounted bodyguard pace slowly past, each with an archer in attendance, his oxhide shield looped over his shoulder, his chain mail faintly glimmering, his spear at rest. It was even now hard for us to believe that the Queen of England that night slept beneath our roof. But there above us on the turret top, stirring gently in the breeze, flew the Royal Standard.

We woke in the morning to the distant blare of trumpets, the skirl of pipes, and the thudding of drums as the contingents began to make ready for the coming Durbar. Soon the long column would begin to wind its way out of the camp and up the slope to the racecourse, at the northerly end of which stood the Royal Pavilion. Opposite the pavilion the band of the Nigeria Regiment and the massed bands of the NA Police would be drawn up behind the guard of honour, this time from the Fourth Battalion.

Shortly after nine o'clock the Queen arrived. By noon those present had witnessed a spectacle that none of them would ever forget. For sheer pageantry it was magnificent, and by the time the last and most majestically accoutered contingents were entering the arena, the commentators had run out of adjectives and the press cameramen had exhausted their color film. The Durbar culminated in a series of massed cavalry charges from the center of the arena up to the Royal Pavilion. This was the Jafi, the traditional salute of the mounted men of the North to their rulers. But as the first waves of horsemen came thundering toward us, shouting at the tops of their voices, turbans streaming and spears aloft to draw up in a cloud of dust and spatter of stones, I glanced a little anxiously at the Queen. This was a little more realistic

than had been planned. But whatever she might have been thinking, she was outwardly quite unmoved.

The following day was Children's Day, and on the Durbar ground where the massed bands had yesterday marched and countermarched, a village in miniature had been erected in which the homely everyday scenes of village life in the region were being played with rapt realism by schoolchildren drawn from every province. Girls were busy spinning and weaving, pounding and grinding corn, preparing food and drawing water. Boys were dyeing cloth, plaiting rope, working in leather, hammering fiercely at a forge, and hoeing farmland. Nothing had been overlooked. Not even the inevitable donkey stubbornly rejecting its load of cornstalks.

That evening the last important ceremony of the visit took place. In the Lugard Hall, in the presence of the members of both Regional Houses, the Sardauna presented a Loyal Address to the Queen. There could have been no more colorful assemblage of its kind in the Commonwealth. The address itself, impressively delivered, matched the occasion. One passage stands out in my mind: "We have yet to find the unity that is essential if racial and religious suspicions are to give way to kindness, tolerance, and respect for each other's way of life. We seek unity but not uniformity."

On the following day the Royal Party flew to Jos for a quiet weekend before traveling south to Enugu to begin their visit to the Eastern Region. Ten days later they returned on their way homeward for a final six-hour pause in Kano.

That evening a visit to the Emir's palace had been arranged. A few moments before five, as the Queen was about to enter her car, I told her that the Emir would greatly like to present his wives, who were, of course, in purdah. If the suggestion was acceptable, my wife would interpret. The Queen agreed, and we set out on a drive that was even more impressive than the arrival at Kaduna. The Emir had assembled more than four thousand horsemen and a large company of black-turbaned, black-veiled camel folk from the northern deserts. Streets and rooftops were black with waving spectators. There must have been half a million people abroad in Kano that day.

To counterbalance the pageantry a reminder had been arranged of how the North was grappling with problems of the modern world. Earlier that day the Queen had met and talked with Alice Paterson, Principal of Kano Girls' Training Center, and her young teachers in training and the girls of the Government School. Now she would see a less orthodox aspect of the War against Ignorance, for the Emir had agreed that the outer courtyard of the palace should be the setting for a demonstration of our Adult Literacy Campaign. The showpiece of the display was a class under instruction. Ahmadu Coomassie, the Chief Adult Education Officer, explained what was afoot as a score or more adults, fathers and grandfathers among them, repeated again and again, syllable by syllable, the word on the blackboard, tracing the letters in the air with outstretched forefingers.

Immediately on their arrival at the palace the Queen and Prince Philip had gone directly to the Emir's council chamber where they had met the Kano Council. Then, the formalities over, while Prince Philip stood chatting to a group of local chiefs, the Queen, accompanied only by her Lady in Waiting and my wife, had been conducted by the Emir into an adjoining apartment where his wives were waiting.

This indeed was history. Excellent though our personal relations with our Muslim friends, practically all of them were still emphatic that the time had not yet come for our wives and theirs to mix freely. Occasionally a European Nursing Sister or school teacher or a Hausa-speaking wife would be invited, out of friendship or should her help be needed, to pass beyond the barriers. But instances were rare. Confidence could not be forced, strongly though we ourselves felt that Northern Nigeria would find herself handicapped until, as in modern Pakistan, educated Muslim women played a part in the foreground of affairs. The position of the Queen was of course unique, but the mere fact that she had met and talked with the Emir's wives could be the prelude to a change in attitude over a wider field.

As the Royal car nosed its way through the outer entrance to the palace on the final stage of the drive through the city, its escort of NA Mounted Police clattering ahead, it was almost dusk. By the time we reached the Residency, night had fallen.

An hour later we were on our way to the airport. Soon, together with Sardauna and Major Ironsi, the Queen's Nigerian Equerry, we were accompanying Nigeria's royal guests toward "Atalanta." An exchange of goodbyes, and with Prince Philip saying, "Think of us tomorrow in London, in the wet and cold of winter," they mounted the gangway and, after a final wave, entered the aircraft. It was all over. The door was closed, the gangway was wheeled to one side, the chocks were pulled away, and the great airliner moved slowly into the night.

Whatever the future might bring in the purely political field, ordinary folk would never forget the days now ended. In no other way could the diverse peoples of the region, thus gathered together in the presence of the young Queen, acknowledged as their own, have begun to think of themselves as a part of a wider family. As Sardauna, himself was later to observe, "A kind of peace, not of this world, came over the country."¹ Not a single case of crime was reported to the police throughout the visit, and this at a time when houses were left unguarded and valuable possessions were there for the taking. By the time the visit was over we were, for a while, nearer than ever before to "One Nigeria."

1. Bello, *My Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 178.

SEEDS OF DISSENSION

1956

From the time the Queen's approaching visit had been announced to the day of her departure a political truce had been faithfully observed by all political parties. Now it was all over. The leaders in the less reputable organs of the local press began to take on a shriller note, and in the principal towns the police thought themselves doubly blessed if a weekend passed without some rally or demonstration keeping them continuously on the alert.

In Kano and Kaduna, and in other large centers, the militant wing of NEPU had recently begun to enlist young children and harlots in its ranks, and at the end of March, Kano, as could have been expected, was to provide the stage for the first serious trial of strength. One Saturday, without warning and on a date deliberately chosen to coincide with the Emir's absence, full-scale rioting broke out. This time the police found themselves engaged, not only with the city hooligans to whom they were accustomed, but with gangs of screaming women and children who pelted them from rooftops and street corners with stones and brickbats and any other missile that came to hand. They behaved with the same cool courage and discipline that three years earlier had kept the mob out of the *Sabon Gari*, but by the time order was finally restored, scores of arrests had been made and nearly 150 persons had been convicted. Sardauna, in reporting the matter to the legislature, reflected the mood of a shocked and angry House when he asked: "What manner of people are these who use prostitutes and children of both sexes between the ages of eight and fourteen to further their cause?"

It all ran true to pattern. The NEPU extremists rarely permitted points of principle to stand in their way. They even allied themselves with the very men—former Lamido Ahmadu of Ada-

mawa for one—whom, when they were chiefs, they had bitterly attacked for corrupt and oppressive behavior. Any chief in office was a fair target. Any ex-chief with a grievance, however ill founded, was a political asset to be exploited to the undoing of his successor and his council.

NEPU's importance lay, not in the support that it commanded in the region (which was not then significant), but in its capacity for making mischief and also in the encouragement that its leaders received from the United Kingdom, where their claims and protestations were accepted at face value. Had Northern Nigerian society been less stable and had its peoples been less shrewd, NEPU's rabble-raising tactics and its reliance on violence as a political weapon could have had ugly consequences.

There was one field, however, in which it came close to achieving success. Over a period of years, a state of tension had been building up in a number of provinces between the adherents of the two principle Muslim orders, or *Tarika*, in the region. This tension NEPU leaders sought to exploit. A *Tarika*, literally a "way" or a "path," is in effect a body of Muslims, part sect, part brotherhood, which acknowledges a common discipline and a common ritual. Shehu dan Fodio and his successors and their followers throughout the Sokoto Empire had belonged to the Kadiriya. This order had originated in Baghdad in the twelfth century and had always maintained a reputation for piety and humility and for a dislike for fanaticism and all forms of ritualistic extravagance.

In the closing years of the eighteenth century, however, an Algerian Berber named Ahmad el Tijani had founded an order, vastly different in complexion and appeal, which had spread swiftly and bloodily over much of northwest Africa and later, though less rapidly, southward across the desert. By the end of the last century it had begun to acquire a small following in certain parts of the Sokoto Empire. Its appeal to the ignorant masses lay in its highly emotional approach, its dynamism, and in the outward manifestations of religious zeal that its ritual encouraged. It was, moreover, closely knit and highly disciplined. Its leaders had little patience with the peaceful and compassionate outlook

of the Kadiriya, whose members were, in their view, over complacent and self-satisfied.

Tijaniya first took permanent root in Kano during the First World War, and from here it spread its tentacles over much of Northern Nigeria until there were few towns of importance where there was not a small "cell" whose *mukaddam* or "deputy" looked toward Kano for direction and advice. Before long it began, in its less extreme form, to make converts among the ruling classes—but not in Sokoto, which remained the stronghold of the Kadiriya.

Apart from its emotional appeal the Tijaniya order had other attractions, political and social. Its adherents, for instance, were absolved from their allegiance in religious matters to the Sultan of Sokoto, a dispensation which was not displeasing to certain among the greater emirs. Again, this same dispensation commended itself to the Hausa merchants and traders in the towns and also to the Hausa peasantry in certain country districts to whom the Kadiriya was the *Tarika* of the Fulani ruling classes whose power and privileges they resented.

That it became so firmly established in Kano is not surprising, for jealousy and enmity between Kano and Sokoto was no new thing. In its citizens' eyes Kano was an ancient and once powerful city, the wealthiest in the North, while Sokoto was a town of no account, buried in the distant bush. Yet, to the Muslim North as a whole, Sokoto was the onetime capital of the Fulani Empire, the city of Sultan Bello and the seat of his successors. Much of the old-time luster still remained, and the Sultan was the premier chief of the North—though Bornu had its reservations on this point.

Of the great chiefs, the late Emir Abdullahi of Kano had been the first to be accepted into the Tijaniya order. While on the Pilgrimage he had come under the influence of a prominent Tijani sheik from Senegal named Ibrahim Kaolack whose strong and persuasive personality was to impress itself indelibly on the aging Emir's mind, and later on that of his son and successor. Strangely, neither of them, shrewd though they were in worldly matters, seems to have been deterred by the thinly veiled personal

ambitions and mercenary outlook of Sheik Ibrahim and his lieutenants.

Thus, with the Emir himself an adherent, the Tijaniya gained in strength until, in 1949, when another leader of the same Kaolack School visited Kano, the scenes of mass hysteria were so alarming in their import that Muslim leaders throughout the rest of the region determined that such a thing must never happen again. In three other cities also, Katsina, Zaria, and Argungu, all of them former capitals of independent Hausa kingdoms, the Tijaniya *Tarika* had taken a firm hold. But the directing minds of the movement remained concentrated in Kano, their eyes turned toward Sokoto, their ultimate target. Their immediate objective was the eastern districts of the emirate, once a part of the old Hausa Kingdom of Zamfara and an admirable breeding ground for trouble, for the population was more independent minded and more critical of authority than, for instance, the peasantry of the Kano countryside. It was in this same area that thirty years earlier, while investigating the Clements murder, I had encountered so deep a dissatisfaction with the Fulani administration that a complete breakdown had occurred.

To the Kadiriya, Tijaniya in its more extreme forms was wholly repugnant. They deplored the extravagance of the ritual, the macabre initiation ceremonies, the refusal to speak to, or to eat in company with, or to associate in any way with their brother Muslims of a rival *Tarika*. There was also a system of "voluntary" offerings, little better than a levy, much of the proceeds of which, it was suspected, found their way to Kaolack. All these things, in the eyes of the orthodox, were rank heresy. Finally, when the Tijaniya began to insist on attending their own mosques on the occasion of the Friday noonday prayer, the one occasion in the week when Muslims are enjoined to worship as one community, the Sultan, normally the most tolerant of men, was stung to action. Sensing direct challenge to his spiritual authority, he ordered the demolition of a number of these mosques. The response from Kano was an immediate flood of abuse, and scurrilous poems and songs were secretly circulated in the affected districts, a development that did little to improve relations between the two great emirates.

For some while after this the Tijaniya in eastern Sokoto remained apparently quiescent, but underneath the surface the *mukaddams* were sedulously tightening their hold until by 1956 they had reached a point where they could risk a further challenge.

Meanwhile, the ruling Kadiriya remained quite unconscious of the danger that threatened them. With no British touring officer to keep them up to the mark the District Heads idled their time away in their headquarter's towns, lulled into complacency by the flattery of the parasites that surrounded them. Instead of moving around their districts and attending to their duties they left matters to subordinates who acted as they pleased and took their pickings in the process. Inevitably, corruption flourished, grievances were not redressed, and public dissatisfaction grew, particularly in the larger towns where NEPU had a strong following among the Hausa merchants and traders. This suited the *mukaddams* perfectly. In the villages, initiation ceremonies grew more frequent, and photographs of Ibrahim Kaolack began to appear in the mosques, in itself a heretical act.

A hundred and fifty miles away in Sokoto the Sultan himself and his council, preoccupied with regional affairs and with political developments, had also largely ceased to tour, relying on the District Heads to keep them in touch with events. Even the British administrative staff, normally the eyes and ears of the regional government, was so short of touring A.D.O.'s that it was unaware of the danger that threatened.

That year the sowing rains were very late, and in eastern Zamfara, as day after day the sun rose and set in a cloudless sky and hopes of a fair harvest faded, tempers grew short and grievances loomed larger. The stage was set for trouble, and on an appointed day the peasantry in a score or more villages, whipped into a frenzy by their *mukaddams*, rose in revolt against their Village Heads, killing one, assaulting others and driving them from their homes, burning, and looting. In other parts of the region, too, as far apart as Argungu and Idah on the Niger, trouble flared up, and for a while it seemed to us in Kaduna as though the revolt would spread like a prairie fire. For the first and only time our intelligence service, of which we were so proud,

had failed us. Then, mercifully, the rains broke, and every man, woman, and child made for the family farms. There was no greater enemy than hunger, and we had a breathing space in which to put into effect the reforms that were plainly needed. Sokoto NA, however, apparently stunned by events, remained paralyzed. Direct action became necessary.

The effect was instantaneous. The Sultan, once aroused, was his old self. During the last year or so he had retreated into himself, and though he was outwardly as friendly as ever, one sensed an inner sadness beneath the surface. He deeply mistrusted the course that events were taking, and he had little faith in politicians. Now again he felt himself a ruler, if only for a while. He, himself, was an intensely popular figure and could have moved alone among the most violent crowds unscathed.

Within a few weeks, largely thanks to his influence, confidence had been restored and grievances redressed. But we had narrowly escaped a major conflagration, and as I told Sardauna and other Northern leaders, should the reactionary elements among the Fulani ruling classes not mend their ways, I was convinced that the region would one day have a full-scale peasants' revolt on its hands the outcome of which might be a collapse of the existing order. Tended by a group of men sufficiently ambitious and unscrupulous, this same witches' brew—compounded as it was of religious intolerance, racial enmity, dynastic jealousy, and political opportunism—might one day boil over again with devastating effect.

THE "MIDDLE BELT" CONTROVERSY

1956

I

A further cause of dissension within the region which had plagued us for a long while was the so-called Middle Belt problem. The expression "Middle Belt" had been coined between the wars to describe those parts of Northern Nigeria which lay athwart the Niger and the Benue between the country of the Ibo and the Yoruba and the savannah lands of the border emirates. The six provinces which lay within this belt differed in many ways from their Northern neighbors. The rainfall was higher, the farmlands more fertile, and though Islam had its outposts and its spheres of influence particularly in the towns and among the ruling caste, its adherents were, overall, in the minority. Finally, Hausa was the *lingua franca*, not the mother tongue.

But here uniformity ended. In every province there were differences in customs, language, and mode of life. At one end of the scale there were the highly organized, predominantly Muslim emirates of Nupeland, at the other the patchwork of petty pagan tribes who owed their survival from extermination at the hands of more powerful neighbors to the rocky hills and thickly wooded ravines that flanked the Bauchi Plateau.

Only in very recent years, as fears for their future began to spread among the non-Muslim peoples of the region, had this expression "Middle Belt" acquired political significance. The more farsighted, and especially the mission-educated younger generation, were already resentful of Muslim attitudes. Now they claimed that, once the British had left, in a North dominated by Muslim Ministers and Muslim chiefs, Christians and pagans would

find themselves exploited and victimized because of their political weakness and their religious beliefs.

On the face of things they had a good case, but they spoiled it by exaggeration in order to secure support from outside the region. In this they were successful, for there were many who did not readily accept the regional government's assurance that all reasonable grievances would be remedied. Had this been all that was needed, the most intractable of our problems could have been solved. But the "Middle Belt" movement owed its strength more to a mass state of mind, based on genuine fear, than to specific causes.

The first attempt to unite the non-Muslim peoples of the region under one political banner had been made in Jos, in 1950, when a number of young men, mostly mission-educated, came together to form a Non-Muslim League, later renamed the Middle Zone League. Then followed a period during which the non-Muslim opposition to the NPC split and came together in a bewildering variety of shapes and forms, in accordance with the whims and ambitions of local leaders, that finally crystallized as the United Middle Belt Congress.

That opposition to Muslim domination first took shape among the Birom on the Plateau is not surprising, for Christian mission influence, in the shape of a crude measure of education and the absorption of Western European ideas, was already widespread. The Birom chief, Rwang Pam, a Christian himself and a former primary school headmaster, had been the provincial member for Plateau Province in our first Northern House of Assembly. He was now a member of the House of Chiefs. He was a plump and voluble man whose transparent sincerity more than made up for his incorrigible garrulity, inside and outside the House.

We were very good friends, and at our many meetings he invariably stressed the bitterness of many non-Muslims at what they felt was the disdainful attitude toward them of many leading Muslim chiefs and politicians. There was certainly a basis for this feeling. Social behavior that seemed perfectly natural to the robust and uninhibited Birom was, in the eyes of the older Muslims, uncouth and ill mannered, though the new generation of

Muslims had less exacting standards. With these matters in mind, and to reinforce their tribal self-esteem, I persuaded the Sultan to pay a visit to Jos as the guest of the Chief of Birom. Eyebrows were raised, but the Sultan's natural charm and courtesy were proof against any possible contretemps, and the Birom were delighted. At last they were being treated as persons of some account.

The Birom, indeed, lived in a topsy-turvy world. The older generation spent their lives, in apparent content, in almost unimaginable squalor in tumble-down villages, hedged with impenetrable cactus, their womenfolk naked, save for a protective bunch of freshly plucked leaves before and behind. And within sight and sound of these villages, large motorcars journeyed to and fro between the mining camps and the well-appointed, electrically lit bungalows of the tin mine managers and their European staffs. Meanwhile, the younger Birom inveighed against the unsightly mountains of excavated soil that desecrated the horizon of a once fair countryside and demanded more compensation for the use of their lands and more of a share in the proceeds. Yet it was not against the tin miners that the opposition of the Plateau tribes was mainly organized. It was against their Muslim compatriots. The larger mining companies, in particular, had learned from events in East Africa that extremes of wealth and poverty made bad political bedfellows, and liberal ideas were spreading fast.

Apart from feeling that they were treated as second-class citizens by Muslims in general the non-Muslims had two main grievances. First, they maintained that they were grossly neglected, in comparison with the emirates, in the matter of schools and hospitals and roads and other public services and, second, that under Islamic law to which large members of them were subject they were, as Christians or pagans, under a permanent disability. Once the North was independent, Muslim law would surely be extended in its scope and be more strictly interpreted, and there would be no British D.O.'s and Residents to whom they could appeal. Even now the Muslim alkalai and police were prejudiced against them. What would happen when they had a free hand?

As regards schools and hospitals, non-Muslim claims of discrimination were without substance, for the presence in their midst of Christian missions had insured, from early days, a degree of literacy far higher than in the emirates where, until recently, education on Western European lines had been suspect. With hospitals, too, the story was the same. All social services operated by the Christian missions were generously subsidized and encouraged by the Muslim Ministers and in particular by Makama, as Minister of Education.

Communications, on the other hand, were very bad, and Kabba Province and much of Benue were at times all but inaccessible from Kaduna and the northerly provinces. But discrimination was not the cause. The many rivers, the heavy rainfall, and wide areas of swampy, low-lying ground were the real enemies, and as soon as we knew we would get our Communications Flight, we built airstrips close to four of the centers that were most isolated. Roads would follow as soon as we could find contractors capable of building them.

It was, however, their status under the law that gave the non-Muslims their most genuine cause for grievance. In practice the Muslim courts had operated to the satisfaction of the people of the region as a whole for many years, and instances of discrimination and injustice had been rare. But in theory at least and on occasion in practice, the scales were weighted in favor of Muslims and against those of any other faith. For instance, the testimony of a male Muslim is held to carry more weight than that of a Christian or a pagan, or of any woman, whatever her faith. To Muslims their law was a familiar thing, to non-Muslims it was unknown and therefore to be feared. To me and to others it had long seemed that the time had come for a change, but direct interference with Muslim law by persons of another faith was all but tantamount to an attack on Islam itself. The subject was one that must be approached with the utmost delicacy, particularly with independence in the offing. Sardauna himself and Ministers like Makama and Isa Kaita admitted that soon there must be changes. But it was a matter of method and of timing, and the story of how these changes came about must await a later chapter.

II

But I have anticipated. Long before this, when my wife and I paid our first visit to Kabba, we had been eager to see exactly what this province that provoked so many contrary opinions was really like. Lokoja airfield, a relic of the war, was considered unsafe. I had used it once and did not intend to repeat the experiment, so we went by rail and launch. We were to embark at Baro.

At the water front two Nigerian Marine launches awaited us. On shore the sun beat fiercely on the corrugated-iron stores of the trading firms, and the heat was intense. But once we had cast off and were clear of the shore, an upriver breeze sprang up and the world was a different place. The river at this point was low, and our launch crossed first to one bank, then to the other as we followed the main channel. There was little movement on the water that afternoon, apart from an occasional string of canoes laden with rice and livestock, goats, sheep, and poultry. On the shore there was more to see. First a troop of shaggy-haired baboons, some stalking restlessly to and fro, their black, brutish masks thrusting aggressively toward us, others squatting near the water's edge, rapt apparently in thought. Then there were the crocodile, singly or in pairs, sunning themselves in obscene contentment on a narrow sand spit or on an overhanging ledge, ready to leap into the water if approached. And lastly, as the sun was near to setting, a score or more spur-wing geese rose cumbrously from the river's edge and, wheeling overhead, sped swiftly downstream to their night's resting place.

We spent that night in camp. Next day, a little before noon, we sighted Mount Patti, at whose foot Lokoja lies, and shortly afterward, a mile below the point where the Benue joins the Niger, we slid past the old town and warehouses of the trading companies and tied up alongside the Marine Department jetty. This once prosperous port showed few signs of progress since the days of its greatness when it was Northern Nigeria's first capital, for the railway and the heavy lorry had almost killed the old river trade.

But change was on the way, for in the northeast of the region, well to the south of any possible extension of the railway to Bornu, the foundations were being laid of a large export trade in

cotton and groundnuts, for which the river would be the obvious outlet. But first the slow-moving canoe must, at least in part, give way to power craft, and the plans for making the Niger and the Benue navigable by night and for far longer periods in the year must begin to bear fruit. At present the fleet of river steamers, operated by John Holt's and the United Africa Company, could only work at one-third of their full capacity.

For the time being, however, Lokoja rested largely on the laurels of its historic past. After one night there we moved on to Okene, chief town of the Igbirra tribe. But on the way we branched off toward Kabba, where we would spend the day seeing the sights and meeting the local chiefs and dignitaries. Here, L. C. Giles, whom we had not seen since our wartime days together in Kano, was fully absorbed in encouraging and balancing the rival aspirations of the five tribal communities of his division. This was the sort of task for which, enthusiast as he was, he had an especial genius. It was a rewarding task, for an outstanding characteristic of the peoples of Kabba Division, not uncommon elsewhere in the province, was an almost inexhaustible capacity for self-help. They took pride in an ever expanding program of as many new schools, roads, and dispensaries as their energies and resources could contrive, with or without government assistance. This was a very welcome change from the inertia in such matters that was all too common further north. Later in the year, when we offered them an airstrip, the Obaro of Kabba and twelve hundred of his people cleared the entire site of trees and bushes in a single day, an achievement the like of which I had not encountered since my Gwandu days when we built the Niger causeway. And more than thirty years had passed by since then.

Okene, which we reached that evening, also throbbed with life. But there was a tenseness here that had been absent in Kabba. More than four out of five Igbirra lived within five miles of the town center and farmed the countryside beyond. In the course of the previous thirty-seven years the Ata, a man of great gifts and forceful character, had welded a group of loosely knit clans into a highly progressive tribal unit. In so doing he had put Igbirra and, incidentally, his own family very much on the map. But his autocratic methods had earned him increasing unpopularity, and

there was no love lost between him and his supporters and the mass of the population. Only four years previously, the underlying hostility had erupted into violence, and the militants of both sides, armed and in their hundreds, had swarmed through the streets, converging on each other intent on fighting it out. Only the coolness and courage of the District Officer, Roy Mant, and his two A.D.O.'s—one of whom, Bill Ferris, subsequently my Private Secretary, was decorated for gallantry—kept the two sides apart and averted a major catastrophe.

But there was another side. It was a local boast that one of the more important exports of the province west of the Niger, quite as important as cocoa, castor and oil products, was secondary-school boys. A visit to the principal schools in Okene showed clearly why this should be. Indeed, later that same year, this small province was to gain three out of four of all the scholarships awarded by the regional government for the entire region.

That afternoon we set out to rejoin our launches by a different route. Our rendezvous was at Ajaokuta, downstream from Lokoja, one of the early river staging posts. Here again we found stagnation. The little trading station was now derelict, the corrugated-iron store was a rusty ruin, large holes gaped in the roof of the manager's house, and what had once been a jetty was now a gaunt skeleton of rotting poles and slimy decking.

Our destination was Idah, the principal town of the Igala tribe. Igala, it was said, had once been a tributary of the Jukun people, whose military prowess had, centuries earlier, made them masters of the greater part of Hausaland. Even Kano had fallen to their armies, and three hundred miles further to the west at Birnin Kebbi I had once been shown the reputed site of an old Jukun fort overlooking the town.

According to legend the first ruler of the Igala had been the daughter of a runaway Jukun prince. Later rulers, *Atas* as they were termed, had come under the domination of a council led by the *Ashadu*, the Chief Minister. The council, determined to keep the reins of authority in their own hands, had invested their puppet ruler with the attributes of a divine king, so charged with mystic fire that no man must touch him, no man must casually cast eyes upon him, and no man must see him eat, for, being di-

vine, he had no need of food. At all times he was hedged about with parasitic officials who treated the lowly Igala with arrogance and brutality. Thus, by instilling in the common people a feeling of helpless, superstitious awe, the priestly caste ruthlessly made sure that their authority remained unchallenged. The Ata's immediate entourage was restricted to the eunuchs of the household and a corps of pages, the children, originally, of his mother's kindred. They alone knew the innumerable taboos and complicated ritual that must govern the divine king's daily life. Thus each new Ata was wholly dependent upon them and their priestly masters.

According to a further legend, during the early period of Igala history, the daughter of an Ata had allowed herself to be buried alive in order to save the tribe from some disaster that then threatened it. To commemorate this event, every year that followed a young virgin had been offered up in sacrifice. Even in modern times rumors persisted that this ritual murder was still secretly carried out.

While there was no proof of this in 1954, the time of the visit now described, the Ata was still plainly subservient to his grisly priesthood, and at the annual festivals scenes of debauchery and barbarity took place that ill accorded with modern times. These and the cruelty displayed in the ritual sacrifice of goats and other animals were more than the rising generation of Igala could stomach, for Christianity and Islam were beginning to break down the walls of superstition, and change was imminent.

To return to our journey. As we made our way downriver toward Idah the traffic increased, for below Lokoja the river flowed more deeply. Soon after we cast off from Ajaokuta, a pillar of black smoke, emerging apparently from the depths of the forest, showed that a few bends ahead a river steamer with its attendant train of barges was on its way upstream, and if we wished to avoid a swamping, we must keep well clear of the main channel. Scarcely had this giant thundered past than, rounding a bend, we saw approaching in the distance what seemed like a vision from the past. One of the old stern-wheelers, a sooty cloud billowing from its smokestack, its giant paddles thrashing the waters into foam, labored ponderously toward us.

who genuinely enjoyed working among the non-Muslim tribes, preferring their outspoken independence to the polite reticence of the subtler-minded Muslims.

The people who, beyond all others, had from the beginning won the affection and interest of the "Middle Belt" D.O.'s and Residents were the once turbulent Tiv, whose original acceptance of British rule had been preceded by a prolonged and at times bloody tussle. The Tiv, by now three-quarters of a million strong, lived to the east of the Igala in scattered homesteads and hamlets, for they had only recently reached that stage in development where kindreds had begun to coalesce into clans. Despite the efforts of a succession of British D.O.'s and Residents to persuade them to combine for the common good, as late as 1947 there had been no less than fifty-five independent councils in the tribal area, no one of which would admit any other authority than that of their own D.O. and his superiors.

But by then the pattern of things to be was becoming plain even in rural Tiv. Yet for all this, it was to take much patient argument before they agreed to set up a tribal authority. Only in this way, as they slowly realized, would they be able to gain a hearing in the affairs of the region. This they must do, for despite their fiercely individualistic outlook, tribal consciousness was strong, particularly in the face of threatened interference from outside. Already economic pressure was building up both from the Ibo in the south and from the Hausa in the north, and though they still regarded as their friends the British officials who served among them and the Christian missionaries whose teaching and whose schools and hospitals had done so much to transform their lives, they would have little truck with strangers of their own race and color. They came of fighting stock, their record as soldiers in both world wars had been outstanding, and they would not lightly let their independence slip.

Thus they had no intention, once the British had left, of becoming a mere appendage to a Muslim-dominated government based in distant Kaduna. Still less acceptable was union with the Ibo of the Eastern Region who were already nibbling industriously at the farmland on their southern borders and who would, they were convinced, absorb them piecemeal if given a chance.

For these reasons alone it was not surprising that the "Middle Belt" movement, having first taken shape among the Birom and other Plateau tribes, now found its most solid support among the Tiv.¹

To those who knew the facts the entire concept of such a "Middle Belt" Region at that time was little short of absurd. In only two provinces, Benue and Plateau, was there considerable support, and even here half the population was either reluctant or bitterly opposed. Better far, it was said, the remote Fulani and their associates than a government dominated by Tiv and Birom politicians. Apart from the Tiv and the Birom, the movement was strong in southern Zaria and in a few largely isolated areas to the east, in and near Adamawa. On the westward side Niger would have none of it, and although there were secessionist tendencies in Ilorin and in a small area of Kabba, those concerned looked southward to the Western Region. Ilorin, indeed, had its own special problems, and to these I will shortly turn.

With a very few exceptions, such as the Tiv, J. S. Tarka, the "Middle Belt" leaders at that time were men of very moderate caliber. Joseph Tarka, a young, rural science teacher, had enterprise, energy, and considerable personal charm. He had also the sort of personality that appealed to the independent-minded Tiv, who did not care for remote and highly placed political leaders. At this time, however, he was at the beginning of a career that was to take him into very dangerous waters before experience brought maturity of outlook and the opportunity for high responsibilities.

Of the other leaders some were simple, worthy men, such as Rwang Pam, Chief of Birom, and Pastor David Lot. The rest were opportunists pure and simple for whom the dazzling vision of a brand new region, with its ministries and public boards and

1. The fact that in 1967, the Northern Region has been subdivided into six states (and the other two regions into three each) bears little relevance to the problem of non-Muslim minorities of the region in the late fifties. To begin with, the non-Muslim groups that were demanding a separate region or state for themselves in those days are now split between four of the six new states, and in only one of them, that containing the Tiv and the Birom, is there a non-Muslim majority. Equally, the revenues available today are four times as great as then, while staff, in any degree qualified to man the governmental machinery, both on the academic and technical sides, which was then almost non-existent, is at least ten times as numerous now.

corporations, and all that these implied in the way of power and patronage, was argument enough.

To us in Kaduna the main issue was fundamentally one of confidence between Muslim and non-Muslim, and this was the problem that we must set ourselves to solve. In Ilorin, on the other hand, we were at grips not only with internal discontent but with persistent and insidious pressure from across the regional borders. The Action Group had never accepted as final Sir John Macpherson's four-year-old decision that there was no case for that change in the regional boundaries which they fervently desired in order to reunite all the Yoruba in Nigeria under one regional government, their own.

The town of Ilorin and the surrounding countryside had become a part of the Sokoto Empire over a century previously as the result of a military revolt by the local Yoruba Governor Afonja against his master, the Alafin of Oyo. Afonja had largely owed his success to the support of a force of Fulani and Hausa mercenaries under Fulani leadership. But in enlisting them, he had unwittingly encompassed his own end. Some years later they, in their turn, overthrew and killed him, setting up in place of the old pagan Yoruba chiefdom a Fulani-Yoruba administration on the Islamic model.

From this time on a state of war had existed between Ilorin and the Yoruba of Ibadan and Oyo which ended only with the British occupation of Yorubaland in the closing years of the century. A few years later Ilorin Emirate had become a part of the Northern system established by Lord Lugard and had so continued until very recent years when political pressure from Yorubaland proper had produced the state of tension with which we were now faced.

In 1955, a new political party, the Ilorin Talaka Parapo, or Commoners' party, had been formed in the province in opposition to the NPC, to which the official classes and the men of wealth and their supporters all belonged. The party's first aim was to secure a greater share for the common people in local affairs. But, as was to be expected, being in conflict with established authority, it also attracted to its ranks the bulk of the lawless elements of the population.

The NPC spokesman for Ilorin in the Northern House of Assembly, Alhaji Sa'adu Alanamu, had some time previously foreseen such an eventuality. Government, he had said, must be sure that, in introducing democratic processes, control would not be handed over to the *Yan Iska*, the Hausa term for the rootless, work-shy irresponsibles who habitually formed the vanguard of any faction that specialized in firebrand politics.

But the regional government was already committed to local government reform. In consequence, when Charles Michie, as Resident, put forward a plan which would result, in one step, in all councils having a majority of elected members, Ministers, despite many misgivings, agreed. I, too, had misgivings, but Charles Michie had my full support, for I felt, as he did, that time had run out and there was no alternative. We knew that the Commoners' party was poorly fitted for the responsibilities to which it aspired, but we had outside opinion to consider and must take a calculated risk.

Equally, at the time that the decision to introduce the reforms had been made there was no question of an easy victory for the new party. But the situation changed radically overnight when its leaders appealed across the border to the Action Group for direct support. Up to this point, the Action Group had largely restricted its campaign to detach Ilorin from the North to the southerly parts of the emirate, whose inhabitants, being of different Yoruba stock from the Ilorins, had long been at odds with the central authority.

Now a footing had been won in the heart of the enemy camp. This the Action Group militants determined to exploit without stint or scruple, for although they assiduously preached democracy, they saw no harm in dispatching gangs of thugs across the regional boundary to insure by violence and intimidation the support of those whom extravagant promises and lavish largesse had so far failed to convince.

There could be only one result. Within a few months the ITP won control of Ilorin Town Council, the great majority of the district councils, and, bitterest blow of all, of the native authority council itself. From this setback to his authority the Emir,

Abdul Kadiri—a gentle, tolerant man for whom all but the extremists had affection and respect—never fully recovered.

Thereafter followed, by which time I had left Nigeria, a year and a half of misrule, corruption, and political jobbery, where almost every supporter of the NPC not safeguarded by law, even down to the humblest laborer, had been ruthlessly ousted from his employment in favor of a nominee of the new order. Finally, the regional government was compelled to dissolve the NA council and replace it for a period by one appointed directly by the Ministry of Local Government.

The Ilorin experiment was to leave a very bitter taste, particularly as the price demanded from the ITP by the Action Group had been support for its campaign to secure the transfer of Ilorin Emirate to the Western Region. Looking back, perhaps it would have been wiser to have faced the music and to have withheld agreement to an unofficial majority in the Emir's council, i.e., the native authority council, until the system had proved itself in the urban and district councils. But who could have foreseen that the ITP would have been so incompetent and so corrupt? If we were too precipitate, the fault, if anyone's, was mine.

Chapter 22

THE "TWELVE PILLARS" POLICY AND THE "NEW MODEL" DISTRICT OFFICER

1956-1957

I

In the course of my travels throughout the North during the four and a half years that we had by now been in Kaduna, I had always done my best to fan the flame of local pride and local enterprise. Were the attractions of high-level politics and commerce to draw the best brains and the strongest personalities away from the provinces this flame might well begin to flicker, and the vitality of the region as a whole would suffer. The twelve provinces, I had always maintained, were the twelve pillars of the region on which the entire edifice rested, and each province must carry its own share of the burden.

Now, as the agitation for a "Middle Belt" Region began to cloud our hopes of regional unity, it occurred to me that in this concept, which was later to be termed the "Twelve Pillars" Policy, there might lie the seeds of a solution. Were we to grant to each individual province the right to manage its own internal affairs without undue interference from Kaduna we would probably find that we had struck at the roots of the problem. Just as in 1951 and 1954 the central government had delegated to the regions, the region should now delegate to the provinces. Surely the offer of a definite measure of local autonomy, safeguarded by law, would buttress morale in areas where discontent and apprehension were highest and encourage initiative throughout the region as a whole.

Undoubtedly, a feeling of insecurity and lack of confidence in the future was basically the trouble. It seemed significant, for in-

stance, that it was among the loosely organized tribal groups such as the Tiv and the Birom and the primitive pagan communities to the east and west of them that agitation for a Middle Belt Region was strongest. The more closely knit Igala and their neighbors seemed proud of their connection with the North and showed no signs at all of wishing to sever it.

A bold measure of devolution of authority to provinces would serve other important ends. As matters were, each one of the sixty-nine native authorities, the sixty chiefs and their councils, and the nine tribal councils dealt directly with the regional government through the British Resident. But before many years the British Residents would inevitably go. In their place, I had suggested to Sardauna, they might consider the appointment of elder statesmen as Provincial Governors, on the old Turkish model, with, at first, a British administrator as Provincial Secretary. The creation of a provincial council with a free hand in local affairs and sufficient funds to carry out the duties assigned to it would pave the way to such a change.

But before my ideas had taken firm shape, they had been given fresh impetus as the result of a meeting with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. Although little mention has been made of him in recent chapters, we had always remained in close touch by letter and by personal contact. He brought with him to Kaduna the fruits of his experience in a rapidly widening field, and I always looked forward to our meetings, for we could talk together as old friends and with complete frankness.

He had never been happy in Lagos, the atmosphere was uncongenial, and at times he wished desperately that circumstances would permit him to go back to his beloved North in any capacity in which he felt he could be of use. His dilemma was the greater in that he often felt, during this period, that differences in outlook and temperament would never permit Northern political leaders to work in genuine harmony with their opposite numbers from the other two regions.

But, apart from affording him the opportunity to unburden himself, I could do little more than counsel patience. "I understand very well how you feel," I told him, "and things may not work out between the regions in the way we hope. But one thing

is vital. Should you ever reach a point where a break is threatened, let it never be the North that takes the fatal step." Nigeria by now, I was convinced, was indivisible. There should be no turning back.

Abubakar was at this time a tired man, and there was a danger that his health might break down. He had always been an avid reader, and in earlier years I had sent him books on subjects that appealed to him. Now he was in need of very different fare, and each time he passed through Kaduna on tour, or to take a few days rest in his native Bauchi, we had ready for him a parcel of paperbacked "thrillers" and "whodunits" from my own growing store of escapist literature.

On the occasion in question Abubakar gave me two sheets of typescript for comment. He, too, it seemed, was thinking in terms of provincial devolution, for here were outline proposals for provincial councils with special powers on the lines of our regional structure, reduced in scale. He, too, felt that there must be a closer link between the native authorities and the regional government and that the provinces should have far greater freedom of action.

After a long discussion a final draft was prepared for consideration by Sardauna and his colleagues. Sardauna himself had already expressed agreement with the idea, but I was not too sure that he would be able to carry his fellow Ministers with him, for the plan, to be successful, would involve the surrender by the NA's of a number of their own cherished functions. To this some of the more powerful chiefs and their councils might not agree. Opposition, however, was not nearly as strong at first as had been expected, and we decided to go ahead.

But while it was one matter to have what seemed to be a good idea, it was quite another to give it effect, and for this we should need expert advice. The obvious choice would be R. S. Hudson, as head of the African Studies branch of the Colonial Office. The project would, I felt sure, appeal to him greatly. If we could persuade the Colonial Office to release him he would be ideal for the task, for apart from his great experience in such matters, Ministers liked and trusted him.

A few weeks later the Hudson Commission assembled. It con-

sisted of Hudson himself, as Sole Commissioner, and three advisers drawn from the region.

In early 1957 the commission's report was issued. The Hudson Plan, as it could be fairly termed, proposed, in brief, the creation in each of the twelve provinces of a new arm of government to be termed a provincial administration. This would consist of a provincial council and a provincial authority. The effect, for instance, in Sokoto Province would be as follows. A provincial council would be set up under the chairmanship of the Resident. This would consist of the Sultan and his three brother emirs, eight nominated members, and thirty elected members.

This council would consider and pass the provincial budget and would advise the regional government and pass its own by-laws on a wide range of matters. Its revenues would come partly from the regional government and partly from grants from the native authorities. Council business would be conducted on much the same lines as were followed by the House of Assembly.

The Sokoto Provincial Authority, for its part, would carry out the provincial policy approved by the provincial council and regional policy, as required. It would consist of the Resident, as chairman, two chiefs, four members elected by the chiefs of the province "in-council," and eight directly elected members. The Resident, as Provincial Administrator, would have an embryonic "Secretariat" consisting of his deputy who would be Clerk to the Provincial Authority, and two Assistant Secretaries. The remainder of his staff of D.O.'s would be away from headquarters, advising the native authorities, who would continue to discharge their own responsibilities as before.

Unhappily, some months later, and after I had left Nigeria, although provision had been embodied in the constitution, the larger native authorities, notably the Emir of Kano, began to raise objections. Any curtailment whatsoever in their individual responsibilities was, to them, unacceptable, for they failed to see that in the long run they would gain far more than they would surrender.

The result was a very attenuated version of what had been intended. Yet, despite this setback, it gained many fervent supporters among the younger generation. Indeed, the concept later

attracted attention outside Nigeria, and in 1960 the government of the Sudan, whose non-Muslim minorities presented much the same problem as ours in Northern Nigeria, incorporated in a Provincial Administration Act most of the essential features of our plan.

II

Although, throughout the region, Ministers and leading politicians remained, in general, friendly and considerate in their dealings with their British civil servants, instances of friction at lower levels, particularly in the provinces, were becoming disturbingly frequent. During the early years of ministerial government the elected members of the central and regional legislatures had consisted, almost exclusively, of experienced NA officials. By 1955, almost three times the original number were required, and the road to a political career lay open to much younger men of the same class, for the NA Service was still almost the only source of supply.

These young men had at once found themselves creatures of two worlds. For perhaps two months out of the year they were busy in the regional capital or in Lagos debating matters of high policy and passing judgment, should they feel so disposed, on their elders. The remainder of the time they spent at home, in far less exalted circumstances, under the critical eyes of their native authority and an older generation that was apt to look askance at their brand new motorcars and to feel that they might with advantage pay a little more attention to their duties as public servants and less to local politics and their own aggrandizement.

In circumstances such as these, when any one of them fell foul of his D.O. because of some lapse or shortcoming, his resentment was acute. That the D.O., in passing comment or in reporting such cases to the native authority, was doing no more than his duty was to them irrelevant.

This irritation at the "interference" of District Officers in the internal affairs of the larger native administrations was by no means confined to the younger politicians. There was already a feeling of restiveness among better educated NA officials who felt

that such matters should now be left to them. Yet on the face of things, close supervision of NA staff was as necessary as ever, for the level of efficiency was far from high and embezzlement, fraud, and outright pilfering of NA property were, if anything, on the increase.

Some of the irritation was due as much to the manner as to the actual fact of "interference." Finesse in dealing with NA staff came only with experience, and we were very short of experienced D.O.'s. Instances of tactlessness and excessive zeal which, in the past, would have been philosophically shrugged off could now cause real harm. The great majority of D.O.'s, however, were patient and understanding in their outlook, and they found the change in atmosphere hard to understand, for their help was still patently needed. Their difficulty would have been less had they more direct experience of the effervescent world of nationalist politics in which their critics and detractors moved when they were away from home. But the average D.O. was far too absorbed in his division and in its people's needs to give much thought to politics, until politics were forced upon him.

But here, too, a change was coming. In earlier years we had run our headquarters organization in Kaduna, despite fresh responsibilities, smoothly and effectively with less than a score of British Administrative Officers. Now, however, committed as we were to fully fledged ministries, our demands on the provinces, already understaffed, would soon be more than doubled.

From the beginning I had set my face against the creation of a class of career "Secretariat" officers. Men who frankly preferred an office desk at headquarters to the life of a D.O. had never been very popular in the provinces, and if we were to avoid ill feeling, there must be a constant interchange of staff. Thus a rule was made that only rarely would any young officer be expected to spend more than a year or two in Kaduna. Each time I went on tour I kept my eyes open for likely recruits. The great majority came unwillingly in the first place, gave of their best while they were with us, and left rejoicing when their time was ended. It had been a liking for people, not paper, that had originally brought them to Nigeria.

The new situation that was developing in the provinces was,

however, far too serious in its implications to be countered by mere palliatives. The Resident in his province and the D.O. in his division were the linchpins of government authority throughout the region. Without them ministerial plans and policies would be so much paper, and local government reform would come to a standstill. A serious rift between them and the NA's would be far-reaching in its effects.

Therefore, drastic measures were now needed. The D.O.'s role must be radically changed. He must be raised "above the battle," away from the hurly-burly of everyday administration. The NA's must set their own houses in order, or face the wrath of the regional government and, in theory at least, the wrath of their own taxpayers, who should by this time be more critical when their hard-earned taxes were diverted into the pockets of corrupt officials.

Up to now all correspondence of importance between the NA's and the various ministries and commercial firms and other agencies normally passed through the D.O.'s office. Only in this way had it been possible to insure a punctual response, for although—thanks to the Institute of Administration—NA central offices were growing more efficient, they still had a long way to go. Notwithstanding this, we felt that with self-government imminent they should now be made to realize their own limitations and adjust themselves, as best they could, to meet the challenge.

We would, in consequence, proceed to close down all divisional offices serving the larger NA's and insist on NA's themselves handling their own correspondence. The D.O. would still be there to give advice and assistance should an NA council find itself in difficulties. But for most of his time he would be out on tour again among the people, where his predecessors had been in the old days—as Abubakar and others had reminded us—before the rising tide of paper had begun to hem them in their offices. In those days the D.O. had been the acknowledged watchdog of the common people's interests and their best friend. That image we would now try to restore, for to my mind it was to the people as a whole that Britain's ultimate responsibility would continue to lie until the very last document had been signed and our writ no longer ran.

The new policy had been discussed with, and been accepted by, Sardauna and his fellow Ministers, but the orthodox were horrified. With no D.O. at hand to oversee matters in detail there would be confusion, even chaos, at times, and the commercial firms, in particular, would be sorely tried. But the risk must be accepted, and the divisional offices, as such, must go. Such a revolutionary change could not, of course, be effected overnight. It involved as complex and as swiftly contrived a piece of administrative planning as any that we had yet undertaken. For its success K. P. Maddocks and Peter Scott were jointly responsible.

In order to make clear to the general public the changed role of our "New Model" District Officer I contemplated a change in title. In Lugard's day, the Political Service, as it was commonly termed even when I was first appointed, was staffed by Residents and Assistance Residents, in order to stress the essentially advisory nature of their duties. The term "District Officer" had been introduced later. Now, therefore, at a time when direct control in any form was becoming a thing of the past, it seemed appropriate to revive the old title of Assistant Resident. But Sardauna and his colleagues would have none of it. In the public mind, they insisted, the Residency was the focal point of British power and authority. An apparent intention to perpetuate the word Resident would be misunderstood.

So I reluctantly dropped the idea. And with it there began to fade another vision. It did not seem that, in the time available, we could possibly build a Northern Nigerian Administrative Service on the British model that would command the respect of the long-established and powerful native authorities. Only now were suitable young men becoming available, and it would be years before they could gain experience.

Surely, in place of a structure alien in origin, it would be more fitting and more satisfying to have new model native administrations in which the potential Northern Nigerian Administrative Officer would have an honored and responsible place? These new model NA's, linked by a provincial authority on the lines of the Hudson Plan under a Northern Nigerian Provincial Governor, would provide a firm foundation on which the future government of the region could build. It would surely be firmer than one

which depended on the acceptance by the NA's of the advice and authority of a young and untried Administrative Service.

But Sardauna and his colleagues were already resolved on a policy of gradually replacing British D.O.'s with young Northern Nigerians who would undergo their first years instruction at the Institute of Administration and there was no more to be said. My function, in such matters, was solely to suggest and advise. If, by casting my mind some years ahead, I could help Ministers, already burdened with the problems of the present and the more immediate future, so much the better. But the final decisions must be theirs and theirs alone.

CONSTITUTIONAL TROUBLES EAST OF THE NIGER

1956-1957

I

It had been agreed at the 1953 Constitutional Conference that a further conference would take place in 1956. But as the date arranged grew close, events in the Eastern Region caused the Secretary of State, Lennox Boyd, to insist on a postponement.

For a long time now relations between senior British officials and the NCNC Ministers who had succeeded the victims of the party purge of 1953 had been far from happy. The present party leaders claimed that the rate at which Nigerians were being appointed to posts of responsibility in the Civil Service was far too slow. Many senior British officials, they complained, were being unhelpful in their attitude toward them and their policies. That it was a part of a civil servant's duties to advise against measures that appeared to be unwise was, it seemed, irrelevant. Action, not advice, was what Ministers wanted, and they decided to express their disapproval in what they felt was a suitably dramatic manner.

Thus, when the 1955 budget was presented, the British officials, who still formed the bulk of the Civil Service, found, among other unpleasant discoveries, that they were apparently to be denied any prospects of promotion to posts of high responsibility. The implications seemed only too plain. This was merely a beginning.

The Governor, Sir Clement Pleass, stressed that such action broke the undertaking given by all parties at the previous Constitutional Conference that promotion in the Civil Service would be based on "qualifications, experience and merit, without regard to race." This view Ministers declined to accept, leaving the Gov-

ernor no alternative but to use his discretionary powers. In this course he was fully supported by the Secretary of State.

After further argument the NCNC changed its ground, realizing, no doubt, that its original policy would hasten the departure from Nigeria of men and women whom, as it well knew, the region could not spare. Meanwhile, the Action Group Ministers in the West, smarting under their defeat by the NCNC in the federal elections, and unwilling to be outdone by their opponents, adopted, and later abandoned, comparable measures.

This problem of the relationships between Nigerian Ministers and their civil servants which affected all regions and the federation, though to greatly varying degrees, was as intractable as any that had to be faced. In the eyes of most African Ministers and, more particularly, in the eyes of their followers power must be total. The conception of a Civil Service which could neither be subjected to political pressure nor controlled by patronage was at that time foreign to all but the more enlightened circles. And when that Civil Service was largely staffed by members of an alien and, until recently, dominant race, undue independence in outlook was apt to become, automatically, an offense.

As Kalu Ezera clearly and understandingly observes in his book, *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria*,

There is a latent totalitarianism in the attitude of most "nationalist" political parties. When these have captured power through constitutional means there is a tendency for them to pursue and achieve their goals and programmes very hurriedly if not dictatorially. As a result they neither care very much about the observance of individual liberties nor make any safe allowances for the rights of minorities.¹

It was perfectly true, as Dr. Ezera also observed, that a number of British civil servants found it psychologically difficult to adjust themselves to a situation where those who had been masters now became servants. But the great majority of these did not remain for long in the country, and the point must be made that many ministers in the Eastern and Western Regions seem to have assumed from the start that their British civil servants would do their best to obstruct them or circumvent them and to have adjusted their attitude toward them accordingly. The civil servants,

1. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 220-221.

for their part, felt that they were entitled to at least a generous measure of the same consideration and courtesy that they would have received from their political masters in their own country under comparable circumstances.

The events whose outcome were to cause the postponement of the proposed 1956 Constitutional Conference sprang, however, from quite different causes. During the early months of the year there had been a serious conflict of opinion in the higher ranks of the NCNC hierarchy. It came to a head when the party's Chief Whip tabled a motion in the House of Assembly in which he accused his Premier, Dr. Azikiwe, of flagrant abuse of office. He claimed that he had bolstered the shaky finances of the African Continental Bank in which he, Dr. Azikiwe, had considerable personal holdings, by the injection of £2 million of public money. Because of a pending libel action on the same subject the Speaker refused to permit the debate.

But plainly things could not be left as they were, and the Governor suggested that the matter be referred to a public tribunal. To this Dr. Azikiwe would not agree, at which point the Secretary of State decided to intervene. It was essential, he felt, that in view of Nigeria's approaching independence that so grave a matter should be subjected to impartial investigation. He therefore appointed a commission of inquiry under the chairmanship of the Federal Chief Justice, Sir Stafford Foster Sutton.

In its report the commission, while conceding that Dr. Azikiwe was primarily concerned with making "available an indigenous bank with the object of liberalizing credit for the people," found that his conduct "fell short of the expectations of honest, reasonable people." Such phraseology, however damaging in European eyes when applied to a Minister of the Crown, conveyed little in the way of stigma to Zik's admiring millions. In their eyes the concept of a Minister's being expected, on assuming office, to abandon all financial connection with an enterprise that he had himself built up was little more than a nicety and quite irrelevant in the circumstances. Surely, all that Zik had done was to further his people's interests by insuring that their bank did not collapse and leave the field open for foreign banking interests. A matter more for congratulation than condemnation. In fact, the whole

affair, it was widely suspected, was little better than a plot contrived by "imperialists" to discredit and dethrone their idol for their own ends.

Public feeling on the matter was put to the test by the dissolution of the House of Assembly and the holding, in March, 1957, of fresh elections. In these Dr. Azikiwe, who by now had transferred his interests in the bank to the regional government, was returned triumphantly to power.

Elections for the Regional Houses of Assembly in the Western and Northern Regions had taken place during the previous year. On this occasion, in May, 1956, the Action Group had reversed the decision of the electorate in the federal elections and had been returned to power with a small majority.

The Northern elections were held some months later. During early discussions Ministers had agreed that the electorate was ready for a less cumbersome system than that which lack of experience and a parochial outlook had dictated in the past. On this occasion there would be a primary stage and a final stage in place of the original three or four. I had also advised strongly that public opinion outside the region and particularly in the United Kingdom would expect appreciable progress toward direct elections in all constituencies. It was therefore informally agreed that there would be direct elections in a dozen or more of the larger towns. I was on leave during the period that the new electoral regulations were being prepared, and when I returned I found, to my surprise, that provision for these direct elections had been omitted. However, late though it was, Ministers agreed to take the plunge, and fourteen towns were duly listed.

The result of the election was another sweeping NPC victory. Out of 131 seats they gained 103. A number of seats in the large towns fell to the opposition, and it was claimed that had direct elections been held in all constituencies, a course that was then quite impracticable, the NPC could have been defeated. In this contention there was little substance, as events were, in due course, to show. In later years when the electorate was ready for direct elections, the support for the NPC remained as constant as before. They had, and continued to have, the mass of the electorate behind them.

II

Although federation had made the regions far more independent of Lagos in the management of their own affairs than had been the case before, the North and the West were still not content. They wished, for instance, to split the Nigeria Police into three regional police forces, a dangerous measure that would have left the federal government powerless should its authority be seriously challenged anywhere in Nigeria, unless, of course, as a last and, to us, an all but unthinkable resort, it called in the army.

Regions were also extremely critical of any apparent attempt on the part of the federal government, or its servants, to encroach on their preserves or to ride roughshod over their interests. Such attitudes naturally affected the outlook of regional representatives in the federal legislature, and the NCNC and NPC Ministers of the coalition government, differing as they already did in outlook, temperament and ultimate aims, found occasional cause for disharmony.

Thanks, however, to the personality and influence of the Governor General and to the wisdom and restraint of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, this disharmony rarely showed above the surface. Had a lesser man than Sir James Robertson presided over Nigeria's Council of Ministers during these years, the final stages on the country's road to independence would have been longer, stonier, and more hazardous than, in fact, they were. His sheer presence and patient humor insured that, however highly charged the political atmosphere, reason would in the end prevail.

To us in the North he was always a good friend, understanding as few could have done our own special problems. In our personal relations it was with the Robertsons as it had been with the Macphersons. Their visits to Kaduna always came as a happy break in our daily round, and on the many occasions that we stayed with them in Lagos the great house overlooking the lagoon was made for us as much a home as any Government House could ever be. With my brother Governors, too—Clem Pleass and his successor, Robert Stapledon, at Enugu, John Rankine at Ibadan, and Ralph Grey, Chief Secretary, in Lagos—relations were also close and friendly, the surest possible solvent to the instances of misunder-

standing and even hostility that cropped up from time to time between one region and another.

But although at the top, where it mattered most, we all worked in amity and with a common purpose, it would be idle to pretend that all was well throughout. At lower and less personal levels there was frequent friction between Kaduna and Lagos. Neither was Kaduna, by any means, always in the right. But there were two Lagos, the Lagos of our many friends and that other Lagos which was, to those who lived in it, a world almost in itself. The trouble largely sprang from the fact that many civil servants had only recently been imported from outside Nigeria and knew nothing of conditions in the three regions or of Nigerians. Others had spent almost their entire service in the capital and were in little better case. Others again had not yet grasped that the authority that was once theirs as senior members of central departments of government had disappeared in the wake of constitutional reform. Just the sort of situation, in fact, that we were anxious to avoid in Kaduna vis-à-vis the provinces.

Chapter 24

LANCASTER HOUSE

1957

On March 7, 1957, the Gold Coast was granted independence. In future, its new rulers had decided, it would be known as Ghana, thus reviving vividly proud memories of a notable era in Sudanic history. When, in the eleventh century, the wealthy and powerful kingdom of Ghana had fallen to Muslim conquerors from the north, large sections of the population had fled six hundred miles southward to settle in that tract of territory that was later known as Ashanti and the Gold Coast. Now, nine hundred years later, Ghana would be reborn.

The appearance of Ghana on the international stage as a sovereign state and a full member of the British commonwealth set up a shock wave of emotion that was felt in nationalist circles throughout the greater part of Africa and, most of all, in nearby Nigeria, where demands for early independence at once grew more insistent. But the more experienced of the Northern leaders were still privately doubtful. In the 1957 staff list of the region's Public Service only one in six out of nearly two thousand names were Nigerian, and many of them came from outside the region. The rate of entry of qualified Northern Nigerians into the regional Public Service was increasing fast, but it would not be possible, for some time, to provide more than a trickle for the federal service. Now the region was almost entirely dependent on the federal government for its revenues. Surely a few more years' grace in which to catch up could make all the difference.

But the younger men felt no such concern, and when a motion came before the House of Representatives on March 26 requiring that delegates to the forthcoming Constitutional Conference should demand independence for Nigeria, the NPC leaders had no choice but to fall in with the wishes of their followers.

The motion had been tabled by Chief Akintola, the Yoruba leader of the opposition, on behalf of the Action Group. In a restrained and generous speech he said that Britain had "in a large measure, succeeded in humanising the imperialism" that Africans so disliked, and that she had used her "imperial power to weld a number of people together who would otherwise have remained to this day as warring tribal groups."

Unhappily, however, and possibly to insure that the Ibo-dominated NCNC did not outbid him in nationalistic fervor by advancing the date, he demanded independence in 1957, that is, within a bare nine months. This was something that the North, having only recently decided to ask for regional self-government in 1959, could not possibly accept. Momentarily it seemed as though a crisis comparable to that of 1953 was imminent.

Providentially, an Eastern member, Jaja Wajchuku, as in 1953, again stepped into the breach and in a soberly realistic speech, in which he emphasized the time needed for preparation, moved that the date be amended to 1959. This amendment Abubakar at once supported, and after a debate that was dignified, yet moving, the motion, as amended, was unanimously passed. The die was now cast.

Six weeks before these events, I had received from Abubakar a letter in his own handwriting. This letter I now reproduce in full, in view of its relevance to subsequent events and, in particular, to the writer's own tragic end.

House of Representatives, Lagos
10th Feb. '57.

DEAR SIR BRYAN,

I am forced to write to you on my personal problems. It is not common with me to worry people with my difficulties but I trust you as a father and hence I am writing.

I am now thinking very much about my future. The climate of Lagos is not suitable to my health and I am never happy here though I find the work most interesting and the people respect me generally. I have been doing my best to assist in making the federation work though I myself do not believe that the present type of federation can exist without the British Administration. There is much talk now about a Prime Minister for Nigeria after the Constitutional Conference and my name is being freely suggested as one. Now I do not like to be a Prime Minister under the present arrangements and I also

do not like to continue with my stay in Lagos. I am very tired of politics and I am seriously thinking of retiring quietly at the end of this year. I cannot see in what other capacity I can serve the N. Region and so I hope to take up my N.A. Education work again. You will appreciate the delicate situation in which I am now placed and so I think of quitting politics without any fuss. I have been discussing this matter with my colleagues for some time but they do not seem to appreciate my difficulties. Some of them even say to my face that only death can free me from Lagos! If I act it will be without their knowledge. . . . No British Administrator knows more about us in the North than you do and so I come to you for . . . guidance in helping me to solve my personal difficulties. I appeal to you as a son to a father.

Yours

ABUBAKAR T. BALEWA

In my reply, dated February 19, I said:

. . . I who have lived so many years in the North completely appreciate the reasons why you feel you cannot tolerate, much longer, comparative exile in Lagos. On the other hand, the years that you have spent in Lagos in the course of which no Nigerian has, in my view, done anything approaching so much in furthering the interests of the North and of Nigeria, have not been wasted. You have acquired knowledge and experience which your people need and which, hard though it be, you cannot rightly withhold from them. You know as well as I do that in newly developing countries political ideas and political aspirations spring easily from the soil. The plant of rarest and tenderest growth is that of leadership. . . . Consider, for instance, Pakistan and the Sudan, the first of which had a good century's start on the North and the latter the equivalent of a generation. Look around you in the North and see how few leaders there are and how poor, at present, is the calibre of the "Second Eleven." . . . [I]n time others will come forward but, for the present, the North . . . must retain the services of its few experienced leaders. This to you may seem heartless . . . but there is only one Abubakar. . . .

Then followed the suggestion that, after the forthcoming Constitutional Conference, means should be found to give him a complete rest; until then he should not try himself too hardly. Finally, a warning that there were signs of widespread disaffection in the region. Unless the experienced and responsible leaders of the North combined to take action, great danger lay ahead.

Abubakar accepted my advice. In the meantime, preparations were going forward for the 1957 Constitutional Conference, and

before leaving Lagos for London he wrote to me again. He wished me to prepare for him, personally, two papers. In one he asked me to set out what, in my view, were the essential requirements for a new nation aspiring to independence. In the other paper he asked me to lay down what I thought should be the minimum safeguards that the North should demand before finally committing itself to independence. There were many dangers. "What, for instance," he wrote, "might not happen in an independent Nigeria, should Departments like the Treasury and the Customs come under the control of Ministers drawn from political Parties hostile to the North, which would have only a handful of its own sons in the Federal Service?"

Abubakar's relations with Sir James Robertson, as Governor General, were close and friendly and were to become closer. But in matters such as this that directly affected the region, I was to him just another Northerner. The first paper presented no great difficulty. But when it came to the second, I had to stress that constitutional safeguards would not be worth the paper on which they were written, once a legislature made up its mind to scrap them.

It had also to be remembered that, in the ultimate resort, it would be the armed forces of the state—the army and the Nigerian Police—on whose discipline and loyalty the government of the day might have to depend, maybe for survival. It was therefore of great importance that the composition of both forces, both as regards officers and men, should represent a reasonably balanced cross-section of the major ethnic groups in the federation.

At the moment, in the army, men in the fighting units were predominantly Northerners, not Northern Muslims as in the past, but pagans and Christianized pagans from Tiv, Zuru, and from the hills and valleys of Bauchi and Adamawa. The technicians, on the other hand, and the men in the supply and transport units came almost entirely from the South. Equally, the Northern police, because of superior educational standards, were mostly recruited from the non-Muslim Middle Belt Provinces, while, for different reasons, a high proportion of the police in the South were Ibos.

With officers, the position was largely reversed. There were, I

thought, far too few Northern officers, a situation which, under stress, might have awkward consequences, as could the imbalance among other ranks. Much as one might dislike the thought, tribalism would be a potentially explosive factor in Nigerian politics for some time to come.

On May 23 the delegates assembled in Lancaster House. The Secretary of State, Mr. Lennox Boyd, presided, and, this time, the Regional Governors were present in addition to the Governor General. But our part was largely played in personal discussions in less formal surroundings. In the conference chamber it was for the politicians to hold the stage.

Sometimes these discussions were fruitful, sometimes not. But they served to smooth out differences and to provide an opportunity for detailed explanations that would not be appropriate for open debate. A case in point involved the future status of chiefs. To my mind the best hope for the future stability of the region lay in what I termed a "balance of influences." This would insure that neither the chiefs, as in the past, nor a highly organized party machine, as could be the case in the future, nor a group of extremists, supported by the mob, could exercise a dominating influence over affairs. To achieve this "balance of influences," however, it would be essential to keep "chiefly affairs" and, in particular, the power to appoint and depose chiefs out of politics. Now that the Governor, who had hitherto been responsible for such matters, would no longer have executive functions I felt that they would most suitably be intrusted to a council, an extension, possibly, of our regional Privy Council. I therefore had suggested, though not very hopefully, that this council should consist of a small number of leading chiefs and elder statesmen under the chairmanship of the Governor and that it should contain no political figure. The courts could provide a remedy in the event of difficulties. Sardauna, however, accepted the principle but preferred that he, as Premier, together with a number of chiefs should form the membership. Thus, in future years, political issues would largely influence decisions with results that would not always be happy ones.

By the time the conference was over, thanks largely to the skill and persuasiveness of the Chairman, a very great deal had been

accomplished. Within a matter of weeks the Eastern and Western Regions would become fully self-governing, while in the North, whose leaders still preferred to move by gradual stages, the Civil Secretary and the Financial Secretary would disappear from Executive Council. This, in effect, would mean that control of the Civil Service, Finance, and Information Services would pass from the Governor's purview to that of a Minister. Hedley Marshall would remain as Attorney General.

An even more significant decision was the creation of the post of Prime Minister of the Federation and the disappearance from the Council of Ministers of its three British officials. The membership of both chambers of the Northern legislature would be increased, there would be more Ministers and there would be a federal Senate, with equal representation from all regions. The Southern Cameroons (which would later join the Cameroons Republic) would be given the status of a region. The Northern Cameroons would remain, and still remains, a part of the North.

But there were two issues on which opinion was sharply divided: the regionalization of the Nigeria Police and the future of racial minorities, with which was connected the demand for the creation of new states or regions. As regards the police, the final decision was to leave matters as they were, at least for the present.

The future of minorities, however, was to lead to endless discussions, for all three regions were affected in different ways. The situation in the North has already been described at length. In the East and the West the problem was also complex, for in both regions a third of the population came of different stock from and spoke a different language from the dominant Ibo and Yoruba. Finally, the conference decided that the problem was too involved to admit of any immediate decision and agreed that the Secretary of State should be asked to appoint a commission of inquiry to ascertain the facts and to make recommendations.

At the beginning of the conference the Premiers of the three regions had asked for an undertaking by the United Kingdom government that Nigeria should be granted independence in 1959. But the Secretary of State had declined to be drawn into signing a "blank check" at this stage. With so much pressure for the creation of new "states" it could be that in two years time the

face of Nigeria would have undergone considerable change. The furthest that he would go was to promise that if, after the 1959 federal elections, the new House of Representatives should make a request for independence within the Commonwealth, the British government would then do its best to accede by the date designated.

The leaders of the main delegations, who had up to this point been well pleased with the outcome of the conference, now expressed great disappointment at their failure to secure a promise of a firm date for independence. Having recorded their protest, however, both Sardauna and Chief Awololo made it plain that they had no intention of taking the matter further.

Dr. Azikiwe, on the other hand, though he admitted the difficulty caused by the "claims and counter-claims for separate states," professed to being bitterly concerned with the Secretary of State's decision. He blamed the "inexperience, if not the ignorance, of certain Nigerian leaders in the art of diplomacy" for not "sticking to the 1959 deadline" and the "vanity" and "gullibility" of the Nigerian delegations "in swallowing the soothing opium of flattery administered by experts in this branch of 'White magic,' " that is, the Colonial Secretary and "his galaxy of experts."¹ But Nigerians as a whole accepted the situation calmly, and in the North there was wide relief that the Region would now have longer to make ready.

1. *Zik* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 135-136.

MUSLIMS AND NON-MUSLIMS AND THE LAW

1957

Nothing more clearly exemplified the conflict of the old and the new in the Northern Nigeria of the fifties than the contradictions and shortcomings of its legal and judicial systems, three of which, it will be recalled, Muslim law, customary law, and English law, were simultaneously in force throughout the region.

Of all the cases heard or tried in the region more than nine out of ten came before the Muslim courts and the customary courts. These courts were, in themselves, admirably suited for the society for which they had been designed. The people understood them, they were cheap, and the procedure was simple. The Muslim courts, which heard the great majority of cases, applied, of course, a well-known and authoritative form of law. But even the customary courts, which dispensed acceptable everyday justice according to the traditions of the non-Muslim tribes that they served, fully satisfied local needs.

Finally, over and above these courts, was the High Court, which, with the magistrates' courts, applied laws based on the common law of England. Apart from acting as courts of appeal, where so empowered, from the Muslim and customary courts, these English courts served the needs of the cosmopolitan communities of the larger towns.

From the early years of the British occupation until very recently, these three systems had operated side by side with very little friction. Only rarely had there been cases of outright conflict, for each system catered for a special need. But now society, even in the rural areas, was undergoing a revolutionary change,

and sophisticated crime and complex litigation had become widespread.

This was not all. In our eyes, the outstanding defect of the Muslim courts was the manner in which, both as regards the credibility of witnesses and the degree of punishment, Muslim law differentiated between male and female and Muslim and non-Muslim. In the past, should all else fail, any man who felt himself cheated of justice in a native court could go straight to his D.O. and demand his intervention. And although the standards of the Muslim courts were normally high, it was, to an appreciable extent, this right and the mere knowledge that it existed that had kept the native courts, Muslim and non-Muslim, so free from corruption and misuse.

But already the D.O.'s powers of intervention had, under political pressure, been greatly curtailed. They scarcely accorded, it had been argued, with the principles of self-government. This was perfectly true. But non-Muslims, alarmed by the threats of reactionaries, were wondering what could preserve them from the full rigidity of Muslim law after the departure of the British. Who would transfer cases in which they stood at a legal disadvantage from a Muslim court to the High Court? Indeed, might not further forms of discrimination be applied?

Under such circumstances, how could they be expected to subscribe to the concept of "One North"? All other Muslim states that valued world opinion had long since resorted to a penal code as far as criminal justice was concerned. Indeed, only in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and Yemen—where, incidentally, there were no large non-Muslim minorities as was the case in Northern Nigeria—was Islamic law applied in a general way. Elsewhere it was confined to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other matters affecting the personal or family status of Muslims. Why, therefore, was Northern Nigeria holding back?

Not only the non-Muslims of the region would be asking this question. Opinion abroad would be equally critical. Looking further ahead, when independence came, what sort of an image would Northern Nigeria present to the world at large? No country whose legal and judicial systems did not conform with internationally accepted standards could hope either to be respected or

to prosper. Progress and expansion would be very largely dependent on large-scale foreign investment, and what foreign firm would hazard its capital and its nationals in a country whose laws and courts of justice were suspect?

Such then was the situation. Administrators like myself were more liable to be influenced by what was politically and psychologically probable than by what was legally possible, as was the case with lawyers. I therefore did not believe that the Northern leaders would allow themselves to be involved in any reactionary measures of the nature feared. Nevertheless, for the sake of its reputation alone, the time had come for the North to undertake a thorough modernization of its entire legal system.

How this was to come about was another matter. What appeared perfectly clear to the outside observer was very far from obvious to the rigidly orthodox Muslim of Northern Nigeria. To him the law that guided his daily life and his religion was one and indivisible, and for an unbeliever to attempt to interfere would be an unwarrantable intrusion. Indeed, the mere idea that any man who was not a Muslim, however great his international reputation as a scholar, could presume to advise Muslims on matters of Muslim law was at that time generally unacceptable. This was something that the legal advisers of the Secretary of State found it very difficult to understand.

On the few occasions in the past that I had found it possible to broach to Sardauna and his principal colleagues the need for reform, the most that I could get them to concede was the need, before long, to grant non-Muslims the right to be tried by a court other than a Muslim court. Any suggestion, however tentative, that one day the North might need a penal code in substitution for the present system was met with silence. Anything that savored of secularization was supremely distasteful to them, and prominent Northerners who had in the past visited the Sudan and Egypt had, almost without exception, commented regretfully on the manner in which the old ways had been abandoned.

My earlier approaches had taken place before and during the Constitutional Conference. Now, with self-government approaching fast, the mood was beginning to change. It was time to try again. Why not, I asked Sardauna, send a delegation to Pakistan,

the Sudan, and Libya to study in detail the manner in which they had adapted their legal systems within the broad framework of Islam to meet the demands of the modern world. When the delegation had returned and had made its report the countries concerned might be asked to send a small group of eminent jurists to suggest how Northern Nigeria might best handle her own particular problems. Sardauna listened without comment. He would think matters over and return on the following day. Next morning, to my great relief, he announced, not only that he accepted the suggestion, but that he would improve on it. There would be two delegations, not one, and on both of them there would be a Christian to represent the non-Muslim communities of the region.

But before there had been time to send news of this development to London, I was informed that the Colonial Office wished to appoint a panel of experts in Muslim law to advise the Northern Nigerian government as to how they should reform their Muslim courts of law. It would be led by a well-known British authority on the subject. The reforms, which would be far-reaching, would by implication be a necessary preliminary to the granting of self-government.

This, I felt, would not do at all. To attempt, in this way, to impose legal reforms so closely affecting their religious beliefs on the leaders of twelve million Muslims on the eve of independence would have a deplorable effect. They would feel that they were being attacked at their most sensitive point. The reforms, essential though they were, must come, I felt certain, from within the body of Islam and not from persons of another faith.

I at once urged forcibly that I should be allowed to continue seeking for an acceptable solution in my own way. Prospects were already much brighter. Sir James Robertson, to whom I appealed for support, indorsed my views. With his wide knowledge of the Sudan, he realized fully what was at stake. He had already suggested an old friend, Sayyid Muhammed Abu Rannat, Chief Justice of the Sudan, as an admirable chairman of the proposed visiting panel that I had in mind.

In the face of this powerful support and with the facts before

them the Colonial Office agreed to shelve their proposals and to allow me to go ahead along my own lines. There was much more to be done, but now, at last, a way lay open to reforms which two years later, after I myself had left the country, would become law.

TIME TO GO

1957

I

These events had taken place after our return from the Constitutional Conference. Some months earlier I had privately sought permission to retire from Nigeria at the end of my forthcoming leave, by which time I should have completed nearly six years at Kaduna. When, however, the news became public, pressure had been brought upon me from many sides, at home and in Nigeria, to stay longer. But there was no doubt in my mind as to what Sardauna and other leading NPC politicians in the region would, in their hearts, prefer. And though Abubakar, soon to become Prime Minister, had said, when I told him of my intentions, "Will you not stay with us till independence?" I knew well that he was speaking out of kindness. Shrewd politician as he was, he could have had no illusions that whatever the general feeling in the region, or even because of it, Regional Ministers, with self-government in the offing, had other thoughts. What they now wanted, as Sardauna was to express it some years later, was a Governor who would come to them "knowing nothing more about the country than he had read in books and papers."¹

For my part, to lay down the burden of my responsibility would not now be hard. The strain of the past years was beginning to tell, and by September there would be little left for me to do that someone else could not do as well, or better. And though my wife and I had many friends in Kaduna, our present circumstances gave us little freedom. But to say goodbye for all time to the land which had been our home for so many years was another matter, and the uprooting would be hard to bear.

These, however, were purely personal considerations. It was

1. Bello, *My Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 212.

more important that the Service should not feel that I was letting it down at a point when things looked like being difficult, or that the "minorities," who had looked to me to hold the ring, should not think that I was going when the going was good. But these and many other arguments notwithstanding, I was convinced that the time was fast approaching when I must go. Very soon, with the departure of the Civil Secretary and the Financial Secretary from Executive Council, the powers of the Governor would be, for the first time, very much curtailed.

But few would realize this, for even the more senior civil servants were very hazy in their ideas about the "cans" and "can'ts" and "musts" of constitutions—as, for that matter, were the majority of Northern politicians. In consequence, from September on, when the constitutional changes agreed at Lancaster House would come into effect, it must be made quite obvious that the Ministers, the Governor's reserve powers apart, were "on their own," as they wished to be. There must be no room for thought in anyone's mind that there was still someone in Government House who might have the power to intervene to whom they might appeal should things not be to their liking. A change in Governors would insure a clean break with the past.

The preceding months had not always been easy. There had been times when Sardauna had become uncommunicative and remote in manner. He had given the impression of one living partly in the past. Perhaps he saw the Northern Region of the future as a reincarnation of the Fulani Empire of his ancestors, with Bornu, this time, at its side and himself at the head. In outward appearance he certainly filled the part. He was always superbly dressed, and the sight of him, and the glittering cortege of large American cars that accompanied him, never failed to please a people that loved display for its own sake. These things and the obvious sincerity of his desire to build for the people of the North a happier and more prosperous world earned him widespread popularity.

But there were those who doubted, mostly men of the older school. "Where," they wondered, "will all this lead to in the years after independence?" Equally, the parallel between the semiregal

state that he affected and that of the old time emirs was too close for Northern Nigerian civil servants of the younger generation to relish. They resented having to dance attendance and play the courtier and, even more so, the fact that their absence would be noted against them if they failed to conform.

It was when one of his moods was on him that he came to see me on some matter, the nature of which I cannot recall. It was certainly nothing that contained any points of difference between us. But when I accompanied him to his car to say in Hausa on parting, as was customary, "May Allah grant us safe repose," he did not reply in the usual manner. Instead, sinking back in his seat and gathering his robes around him, he enigmatically replied, looking straight to his front, "Allah alone knows what lies in the hearts of men."

I was never to know what troubled him. The incident was most unlike him. But the two sides of his nature were ever in conflict, and before long the phase passed and he was his friendly self again.

For some while now Ministers had made it plain that they wished for a freer hand. But constitutional change could not be anticipated, and although I had increasingly consulted Ministers informally and given them information, off the record, on matters that were strictly within the Governor's constitutional competence, there were certain responsibilities that could not be shed. Self-government was approaching, and the first duty of the British administration was to insure that, when the time came, the region was as well equipped as possible to take the strain. This implied, above all else, that the British civil servants who still held all but a handful of senior posts, should be as content and free from apprehension as circumstances permitted. An exodus on a scale that had occurred in the other two regions—which, unlike the North, had a considerable number of trained Nigerian civil servants—could bring development to a standstill and even cause a breakdown in administration.

There were other matters too. There was still trouble with some of the chiefs and their administrations, unrest was rife in Ilorin, the Tijani troubles of the previous year were threatening

to break out again. Hard things had to be said and in public, and at the time the only person with the authority and competence was the Governor. It was not for me to efface myself and retreat into the shadows for the sake of political popularity, any more than it would be possible for Sardauna, when his time came.

The opportunity for plain speaking came with the budget meeting of the House of Chiefs. In the past, advice and admonition had been taken by the chiefs in good part. But this time there were a few who listened with resentment in their hearts. Up to now they had all, without exception, shown scant enthusiasm for self-government, for they distrusted the politicians and felt that with the departure of the British their own positions might be less secure. But now a small number of them contended angrily among themselves that the British administration was introducing democratic practices far too fast. Their world was crumbling almost before their eyes. Better, they thought, have independence as soon as possible while they and their followers were powerful and influential and could dominate the scene.

Men such as these very naturally did not enjoy my telling them that their administrations were guilty of an "apparent inability or unwillingness to safeguard the interests of ordinary citizens" or that "inefficiency, maladministration and nepotism" cost them "the respect and confidence of the younger generation . . . the leaders of the future . . . who would find themselves out of touch with an older generation which had lost touch with the people and had forgotten how to rule."

The only overt reaction came from the Emir of Kano. Two days later a letter from him was delivered to me by a member of his household. The contents were brief and blunt. He wished to resign from the regional government. No reasons were given. His pride had evidently been stung. But to no purpose, for at that particular time his administration was among the best in the region, and a telephone call put matters right. But this flash of wilfulness served as a reminder that Muhammedu Sanusi had one of the strongest personalities in the North and that the time could shortly come when his personal writ alone would run in Kano. Independence to him would mean just that.

II

Early in the year, Ministers had decided that they wished to complete the organization of their ministries in such a manner as would make their control total and absolute. The steps taken in 1955 had gone a long way, but they had left the British departmental heads responsible for their staff and for internal running. This, in the case of the Medical and Works Departments, for instance, implied a greater concentration of authority in British hands than Ministers were prepared to stomach.

The only way in which this could be brought about was by a wholesale dismemberment of the old organization in each case and the creation of something new. The Directors would either become Advisers, with no executive authority, or disappear. Paradoxically, this integration process (the victims sadly referred to it as "disintegration"), which was based on the United Kingdom model, was far in advance of anything attempted either in Ghana or elsewhere in Nigeria—where, incidentally, the proportion of locally born professionally qualified civil servants was incomparably higher.

Very soon these changes would be politically inevitable. But at the time, they were a sad waste of the administrative abilities of an outstandingly able team of departmental heads whom, with the good offices of the Colonial Office, we had painstakingly acquired during recent years. A few years earlier the Medical Services of the region had been badly in need of reorganization and dynamic leadership, and thanks to the personal intervention of Sir Eric Pridie, the Medical Adviser to the Colonial Office, we had secured, from East Africa, Dr. D. J. M. Mackenzie, who, in two years, had brought about a welcome transformation. Now we were to lose him to Hong Kong. Others were to leave a year or more later: Marc, the Director of Public Works, Chambers, the Director of Agriculture, and Wilson, the Director of Veterinary Services. Others, such as Keith Hunter, the Director of Surveys, and Randall Ellison, the Director of Education, both of whom had served for many years in the North, stayed on for a while. I make no apology for this catalogue of names, it could well have been much longer. Distinguished public service too often, in such

circumstances, passes unrecorded, and for what these men had achieved the region had reason to be grateful.

Earlier in the year, before the news of my impending departure had been made public, we had toured three of the twelve provinces. I had hoped, before I left, to visit all of them, but after the Lancaster House conference several Ministers had gone direct to Arabia to take part in this year's Holy Pilgrimage and, on their return to Kaduna, had brought in their train a highly infectious strain of Asian flu. They called it Pakistan flu, for it had apparently originated among the Pakistan pilgrims. First our domestic staff went down, almost to a man. Then I succumbed, followed, one by one, by my own family, with the fortunate exception of my wife.

Nevertheless, despite the delay, we managed to visit six more provinces, covering in the process more than three thousand miles by road, rail, river, and the region's newly acquired Piper Apache. It was now possible for us to move round the country far more swiftly and comfortably than before. Abubakar, when he was Federal Minister of Transport, had pushed vigorously ahead with his plans to improve navigation on the Niger and the Benue, and a Dutch Company, NEDECO, was operating a couple of large diesel-engined launches based at Lokoja. These had ample accommodation and could be hired for official journeys.

As many engagements as possible had to be fitted into our tours, and each one required a vast amount of detailed planning and organization on the part of the Governor's personal staff. On them largely depended the smooth running of our daily lives both in Kaduna and on tour. Miraculously, during all these years, nothing ever went more than momentarily wrong, when it would have been so easy for a very great deal to go wrong, and a tribute to those who made the miracle possible is long overdue.

Hugh Patterson, son of Sir John Patterson, in succession to John Matthew and Bill Ferris and others I have earlier mentioned, had been my Private Secretary since 1954. He was one of the most dependable and consistently cheerful men whom I have ever encountered. Nothing ever ruffled him, and his wife Joan, at such times as London and Lagos combined to overflow my "In" trays, was always ready to help out Marjorie Henderson my P.A.

The A.D.C.'s each stayed with us for one year only; more would have been too much to ask for since theirs was no easy assignment. Victor Hibbs, later my son-in-law, was the first. After him came Imbert Bourdillon (son of Sir Bernard Bourdillon), John Smith, and Jimmie Black. The entire staff worked long hours for seven days a week. I demanded much of them, sometimes I fear too much, but such was the tempo at which we all lived. All of them were very much members of the family, and we remember them with gratitude and affection.

During school holidays we were accompanied on our tours by our three children. It was a wonderful experience for them. Our Nigerian friends were always delighted to see them and to talk with them and invariably inquired after them when they were not with us. Indeed, during our last weeks in the country, one of the most moving things that was said to us, and it was said several times then and years later, was, "We realize that the time has come when you must leave us, but when they grow up, you must send your children back to us to help us in our work." If only it could be so, we thought. But, by then, another generation of Nigerians would have arisen, there would have been many changes, and the old North that we now knew might be little more than a memory.

Our daughter Angela, now aged eight, was at this time a participant in a new venture of Makama's. As Minister of Education he had long been worried by the lack of any suitable school in Kaduna for the younger children of Ministers and of British and Nigerian civil servants. Kaduna and the area around it had recently been excised from the emirate of Zaria where it traditionally belonged and was now the Capital Territory of Kaduna and under the direct control of the regional government. Makama, therefore, put forward the suggestion that we should establish, as an experiment, a multiracial school to be named the Capital School, which would cater for twenty to thirty carefully picked girls and boys between the ages of eight and twelve. My wife and I liked the idea from our own daughter's point of view, particularly as, in the initial stages, the school would be under the eye of Jean Bell, the wife of the Christopher Bell of our Minna days, now Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education.

In addition to the Ministers and a number of Kaduna Europeans, a few of the leading chiefs also decided to enter their children, and the venture, the first mixed school in the North, got off to a good start. The little Nigerians, coming as almost all of them did from homes where courtesy and good manners were taught from infancy, were quite delightful. Four of them who were lodging with Sardauna—Abubakar Tafawa Balewa's Binta and Bala and two others, one the child of the Lamido of Adama-wa—came, on occasion, to play in our garden. We had recently acquired, second hand, a miniature racing car, and although its brakes and pedal propulsion were unpredictable, the children got an enormous amount of fun out of it. But it was not always to be quite so straightforward, as was only to be expected in a school where children of such different backgrounds were mingling for the first time. There was nothing, however, that supervision and tactful discipline could not eventually cure. So Makama persisted, and in later years the school was to expand and prosper beyond recognition.

Of all our farewell visits, that to Sokoto Province imposed the greatest strain. So much of my life had been spent there. As we drove away from the Old Residency and along the avenue of stately mahoganies on the way to the airport, my mind went back thirty years to the time when as an A.D.O. I daily cantered past them on my way to the office. Then they stood little more than head high. Even as we approached our aircraft, while the NA Police buglers sounded the Hausa Farewell, we still could scarcely believe that the parting of the ways had come. Never again would we see the egrets flighting at sunset as our homeward-bound canoe slid through the still waters of the Kebbi River. Never again would we stroll through the packed market place to the sound of friendly greetings or hear the dawn cock crow and the thump, thump, thump of the women pounding corn as our ponies impatiently awaited the morning gallop that would see us away on yet another tour. Of all the letters that were to reach us from every part of the country nothing was to touch us so deeply as the simply, yet poignantly, worded message of farewell from the people of Sokoto, which came to us signed by the Sultan himself and by every member of his council then present. "You have lain down

amongst us at night time, you have risen with us in the morning" It seemed, for a while, almost as though exile faced us, not retirement.

III

No time was lost between the ending of the Constitutional Conference and the bringing into effect of the principal changes which had been agreed upon. On August 8 the Eastern and Western Regions became self-governing, an event for which little administrative preparation was needed in that all departments of government had been under ministerial control since October, 1954. In fact, to all intents, they had already had self-government, and although the Governor still presided over Executive Council and although he could still, in emergency, use reserve powers, the final step was but a short one. The great leap forward had already been taken.

Within less than two months this same leap forward, which had been taken by the East and West three years earlier would be taken by the North. Little enough time in which to dismantle and reassemble, in a completely new form, the greater part of our headquarters structure. In consequence, the work on the "integration" of existing ministries, to which I have already referred, had to be slowed down. Within the next few weeks a number of new ministries must be formed, either from scratch or by subdividing existing ministries. Much of the work of the Governor's Office, now under Bruce Greatbatch, would be taken over by the Premier's Office, which would become in all but name a major ministry. The Civil Secretary's responsibilities would be divided between the Premier's Office and a new Ministry of Internal Affairs. A newly created Ministry of Finance would replace the Financial Secretary's office.

Of the three official members of Executive Council, Hedley Marshall alone would remain. K. P. Maddocks would become Deputy Governor. Peter Scott would go home on retirement. There had been an informal understanding that he would become Economics Adviser, but continuing ill health had affected his outlook, and his relations with Ministers and others around him had

soured. Therefore, when the time came, Ministers declined to create the post, and despite his great worth nothing that I could do would make them change their minds.

Once the new ministries had been set up on paper there would come the problem of staffing them. Hitherto, the key posts in the Civil Service, apart from those of the Civil Secretary, the Attorney General, and the Financial Secretary, had been those of the Residents in charge of the more important provinces. Now the whole emphasis would be changed, and the entire Service, as far as its upper ranks were concerned, must be redeployed to provide the Ministers with the most effective instrument of government that we could devise. Certain provinces would still require outstanding British Residents, but, these apart, the pick of the Service would now be needed for the more important Permanent Secretaryships.

In the new structure the Secretary to the Premier would become Head of the Civil Service, and the principal Permanent Secretaries would have the status of senior residents. In the departments, too, new opportunities would be created to accord with increased responsibilities. Many experienced men were intending to retire shortly. If they could be offered the prospects that were their due, some of them might change their minds.

During all this time Sardauna and his Ministers had been understanding and helpful. Obviously the new structure had to accord with their wishes, and its main features were the result of a joint operation. But when we came to the manning of the new ministries points of difference soon became apparent. Ministers preferred working with British civil servants of their own choice, men who had served them well in the past and to whom they felt a sense of obligation. This was understandable. But although I could compromise up to a point, I felt sure that it was my duty to leave the region with the strongest possible team of top civil servants in key posts. I would have been happier about the future had there been someone of Abubakar's temperament and caliber at the head of affairs in the North. I was afraid that untrammelled power might bring temptations that would not be resisted and that favoritism or personal prejudice might one day play a part in postings and promotions. This I must do my best to forestall,

at least for a while, for it was vital that British civil servants should enter upon the new era now ahead of them in as good heart as possible.

Success would depend very much on the personality of the future Secretary to the Premier, the man to whom the British civil servants would look in times of doubt and difficulty. In Tim Johnston, at that time Resident at Kano, we had a man whom everyone would trust. Only forty-four years of age and the youngest, by far, of the senior Residents, he was already outstanding. During the war he had served with the RAF and had earned a double D.F.C. over Malta. He was both able and forceful and would always say and do what he thought was right; Bruce Greatbatch would replace him in Kano.

This matter settled, I brought in Douglas Pott from Ilorin for the Ministry of Local Government. Dick Greswell, a friend of Niger days, who had had a very successful spell as Secretary to the Premier under the old dispensation, would take his place as Resident. Finally, Charles Michie came in from Sokoto to the Ministry of Agriculture. The remainder we largely found from men serving in Kaduna, most of whom had long service in the provinces.

But the Ministers were not satisfied. They wanted their own list which differed in certain essentials from mine, and though I met their wishes as far as I could, there came a point when further compromise was impossible. There was too much at stake. It even seemed for a while as though the program of events staged for our departure might take place in an atmosphere of thinly veiled ill will.

When my final decision was made known they sent me a letter in which they said that while they recognized my constitutional right to act in the way that seemed best to me in this matter, they felt that I should have followed the example of the Governor General, who had accepted his Prime Minister's list without comment. Thereafter, the matter was never again mentioned. I certainly had no wish to reopen it, though I had learned directly from Sir James Robertson that someone had misled them. It had been the Prime Minister who had accepted the Governor General's list.

By September 1 the operation was complete, and within a few days six more Ministers with Portfolio and four Ministers of State were appointed and one more Minister without Portfolio, the Emir of Katsina. This doubling of the ministerial team was to cause comment. Politics was beginning to pay off, it was said. "Why this extravagance?" Many of the new Ministers were not at all of the same caliber as the "old guard" of administrator-politicians of earlier days, but this was the only way in which they could begin to learn their business.

On the nineteenth we would leave, and between now and then there would be little rest. First, a farewell visit to Lagos, where the Robertsons received us with great kindness. There, on our second evening, we were deeply touched to be Abubakar's first guests in Prime Minister's Lodge, his newly built residence overlooking the lagoon. There were just the three of us, my wife, myself, and our host, a gesture of friendliness far more moving than any form of formal entertainment.

On our return to Kaduna, event followed event until the final day, a farewell parade of the Nigeria Police, Beating of Retreat by units of the Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment, the laying, with the Sultan, of the foundation stones of the new High Court of Justice, addresses from Executive Council and both Houses of the regional legislature, a dinner party and a reception, both on an all-embracing scale, as guests of Sardauna. The North was always generous when bidding goodbye to old friends, and Sardauna never did things by halves.

During these last days many kind things were said that have no place in this book. Yet, as one who had passed by far the greater part of his service among the peoples of the North, it would be ungrateful were I not to record how much it meant to me to be reminded, in the words of Sardauna, that I was still known to them not as the Governor at Kaduna, but as "Mai Wandon Karife," my thirty-year-old nickname. It meant a very great deal to me, too, to hear him say of my wife, who had spent more than half of my Northern service with me, "Of her we shall always retain the most affectionate memories. Her knowledge of the country, her understanding of the people, and her proficiency

in the Hausa language entitle her to a position of her own in our hearts."

We left Kaduna on the morning of September 19 amid the pageantry and ceremonial that by custom signalizes the departure of a Governor on the expiration of his term of office. Yet, as our train drew slowly away from the crowded platform to the thunder of the guns of the Light Battery, we were leaving behind us not pageantry but something much more personal, something that symbolized the friendship that had for so long existed between the Service to which I had belonged and the peoples whose interests it had spent itself to serve.

Attached to our train and adjoining us was the coach of the Prime Minister of the federation. Abubakar had come up specially from Lagos to be present at the concluding ceremonies and to accompany us on the final stage of our journey, an act of friendship entirely in keeping with his nature. With him traveled Isa Kaita, as the representative of Sardauna.

Twelve hours later, accompanied by Abubakar, Isa Kaita, the Emir, and Bruce Greatbatch, we moved across the floodlit tarmac to our aircraft. For the last time, as we went aboard, the haunting notes of the Hausa Farewell faded on the breeze. Within minutes we were airborne and climbing fast as we headed northward for the desert. Far beneath us tiny pinpoints of light showed that in the little towns and villages below there were still some who had not yet sought their rest. For us it was all over. For them, and millions like them, it was little more than a beginning.

EPILOGUE

One

1958-1965

Ten years have now passed since the day of our departure. And in those ten years much has happened, so much, in fact, that it would be wrong to bring this book to a close without some account of the passage of events.

First, in 1959, the North attained self-government. Then, in October, 1960, with Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as Prime Minister, and in the presence of H.R.H. Princess Alexandra, Nigeria celebrated her independence. Thanks to the generous hospitality of the regional and federal governments, my wife and I, with many other guests from Britain, attended both these ceremonies. After the Independence Celebrations in Lagos, Sardauna invited us to join the official party that would accompany Princess Alexandra on the tour of the North that she would make before returning home. But, greatly to our disappointment, it was the wrong time of year, and my old enemy asthma made acceptance impossible.

After independence Sir James Robertson retired from the office of Governor General to be succeeded by Dr. Azikiwe, and two years later my successor, Sir Gawain Bell, the last British Governor in the federation, left after a happy and successful term of office. He was replaced by Sir Kashim Ibrahim, that same Shettima Kashim who had been my colleague during the Bornu affair. A year later still, in 1963, Nigeria became a republic, with Dr. Azikiwe remaining as President. To those of us who had known the Royal Visit this was a sad but understandable step. It was essential that a country of Nigeria's stature should be represented by a Head of State who could meet on equal terms the leaders of sister African territories.

Independence, as was natural, brought vast sums of new money into Nigeria. Nation after nation established embassies, and dele-

gations from the four corners of the world vied with each other in offering aid and in seeking contracts and agreements.

By now, the seed sown in the fifties had come to fruition, and the output of Nigerian craftsmen and technicians had reached a point where capital investment in industry could be absorbed at an increasing rate throughout the country. In the North there have been many changes. On the outskirts of Sultan Bello's city of Sokoto there is a cement works. In Gusau where, in my D.O. days, Moman Eha and the Zamfara bandits had faced trial, a flourishing textile mill stands. Tin is now smelted on the Jos Plateau, and sugar is refined on the Niger flats above Ilorin. Cigarettes, footwear, sweets, scent, canned food, and other goods, once imported, are now manufactured locally.

And this is only a beginning, for on the Niger, below Yelwa, a colossal dam nears completion that will provide power over a wide area and vastly improve river communications both northward and toward the coast. Plans that were under survey or on the drawing board in the later fifties are now complete, and others, then undreamed of, are under way. Ahmadu Bello University—named after the late Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of our days, who first conceived and fostered it—has already conferred its first degrees, and those of its students who come from distant Bornu can now travel all the way by rail. Lastly, at the lower end of the scale, the little Kaduna Capital School of 1957 now caters for nearly three hundred pupils from nine different lands. In 1965, the Northern budget provided for total expenditure of more than £46 million, £7 million of which—as much as the total prewar revenue of the whole of Nigeria—was devoted to education.

The road forward, however, was not without its hazards. In the earlier stages, "Freedom" in Northern Nigeria was interpreted in different ways in different places. Some of the more powerful native administrations saw no reason why they should not conduct their affairs as they felt inclined. After all, the rule of their British mentors was at an end. But although standards of probity in Kaduna itself were sinking fast, Sardauna declined to tolerate the squandering of reserves and widespread peculation in the provinces. Nor had the British wholly departed. Many stayed on

to serve the new regime, and from among these Sardauna picked men whom he knew well to serve with Northern Nigerians on commissions of inquiry. Zaria, Gwandu, and Kano were all involved. The worst case was Kano, whose Emir stubbornly declined to accept the rulings of the regional government. After an inquiry, presided over by David Muffett, there was a wholesale purge of high officials, and the Emir was compelled to go into retirement.

South of the Niger-Benue line Tiv presented the greatest challenge. Elsewhere in the region the opposition had found it expedient, for the most part, either to cross the floor or to remain quiescent. Not so the independent Tiv. In 1960, on the eve of Nigerian independence, the Tiv clans, exasperated at persistent attempts by NPC-backed chiefs and NA officials to intimidate them, exploded in violence. Thirty thousand houses were burned and half a million pounds worth of damage was done. Courageous attempts at restraint by Mike Counsell, the Resident, and others of his staff failed to abate the fury. It was not until the regional government dissolved the Tiv NA council and transferred powers to the Resident and his D.O.'s that peace was restored. But the government still had not learned its lesson. Generous and imaginative treatment was what the Tiv needed. This they were not to receive, and in 1964 disorders on a wide scale broke out again. More police, it was said, were killed on this occasion than in all the period of British rule. The army had to be brought in, and by the time order had been restored several hundred lives had been lost. This time saner counsels prevailed, but it was not to be until 1965, when the politicians had been replaced by a military government, that peace appeared to be assured.

So much for the regional story. In the field of material development I have given instances only from the North. Throughout Nigeria, as project after project took shape, the face of the country changed. In the world of the civil servants, the university professors, the professional men, all went well, and Nigeria's reputation flourished. But in the world of the party politicians, all was not well.

After his appointment as Prime Minister in 1957, Sir Abu-

bakar formed a national government. This continued in being until the pre-independence federal elections of 1959, after which, incensed by the Action Group's persistent though abortive attempts to secure support in the North, the NPC allied itself with the NCNC, itself at odds with the Action Group for much the same reasons. Chief Awolowo thus found himself leading the opposition in the Federal House, a position that he used to such effect that the Prime Minister considered himself fortunate, as regards Western Region affairs, to be dealing with Chief Akintola, now Premier of the region.

Thus, when the Action Group split in February, 1962, there was little doubt where the Prime Minister's sympathies lay. Three months later, disorders in the Western House enabled the federal government to declare a state of emergency, to suspend the government, and to appoint an administrator. Thereafter followed the placing under restriction of many of the Action Group leaders and the appointment of a commission of inquiry to look into the party's administrative and financial record. The results were damning, and although the record, in the fields of finance, of the other two main parties then—or in the case of the NPC, later—could scarcely bear scrutiny, they were in the happy position of forming the prosecution.

Later, in 1962, a far more serious threat developed. Feeling that force alone would permit a return to power, certain prominent Action Group leaders, in collusion with a handful of dissident Northern radicals, plotted to take over the government on a specified date, September 22. On that day, according to the federal government, all the key figures in Lagos, including the Prime Minister himself and the heads of the armed forces, were to be placed under arrest, and radio stations, airports, and other vital installations—even, it was later believed, as far north as Kano—were to be seized. In this manner a *fait accompli* would be presented to the world, with the lawful government unable to call for outside assistance.

To achieve their ends the conspirators had arranged for the training in Ghana of a number of men in the use of automatic weapons and in sabotage. Arms and explosives were imported from the same locality. A part of the Nigerian Army was absent

in the Congo, but, even so, the plan seemed crazy, unless the commitment of President Nkrumah went deeper than was, at the time, supposed. At any rate, the federal security organization, then headed by John O'Sullivan, got wind of the plan in time to frustrate it, but not in time to prevent the removal of much of the evidence.¹ After a nine-month trial Chief Awolowo in company with others and, in a later trial, Chief Enahoro were sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment for their connection with the affair.

In January, 1963, the state of emergency was lifted, and Chief Akintola was restored to office at the head of a coalition consisting of a new party, the United People's party, formed from his own ex-Action Group supporters and the local NCNC. In July, 1963, the Mid West was excised from the West and created a separate region.

During this period the NPC had been gradually growing in authority and self-confidence. By now it had an absolute majority in the Federal House, thanks to transfers of allegiance and a bonus of seven new members from the former Trust Territory of the North Cameroons, which had, by plebiscite, decided to throw in its lot with the North. This new situation was more than the NCNC, now very much the junior partner, could bear for long, especially when Northern projects began to get preferential treatment.

One thing alone could sway the balance. A new census was due in 1962, and on the results the Southern politicians began to pin their hopes—and base their plans. When the results were examined the North showed a rise of 30 per cent, a figure that demographers would consider perfectly credible in Africa. On the other hand, the East and the West recorded increases of over 70 per cent, with specific increases in certain divisions in the East varying from 120 per cent to 200 per cent. The North demanded verification, instead of accepting Civil Service advice to stand by its figures while rejecting the figures of the other two regions, which were obviously grossly inflated. They too could play at inflation. When the new figures came in, there was no change in the

1. Mention should also be made of John Lynn, who handled the criminal investigation. Both officers were awarded the O.B.E.

East and West, but the Northern increase was now 80 per cent, instead of the original 30 per cent. The effect was greatly increased tension between the North and the other regions.

With all parties at loggerheads, the federal government decided to hold a fresh census. When the new figures came out in February, 1964, the North and the East showed increase of 67 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively. The Western increase, on the other hand, had jumped to nearly 100 per cent. Tension between the regions rose again. In the East the Premier, Dr. Okpara, refused to accept the new figures. But he could do little more than protest as the federal government proceeded to arrange for the delimitation of new constituencies on the basis of the revised figures.

Federal elections were due toward the end of the year. The Prime Minister, himself, still hankered after a national government in order to preserve national unity. But the Sardauna and the remaining NPC leaders would have none of it and insisted on a complete break with the NCNC. Instead, the NPC acquired new allies in Chief Akintola's newly formed Nigerian National Democratic party and in other smaller groups. This new combination called itself the Nigerian National Alliance. Ranged on the other side were Dr. Okpara's NCNC, the Action Group, and the Northern radicals, the Northern Progressive Front, fighting under the banner of the United Progressive Grand Alliance.

In the new Federal House, according to the Electoral Commission, working on the basis of the latest census figures, the North would have 167 seats, and the East, West, Mid West, and Lagos together a total of 145 seats. On this basis, and in the light of all the evidence, it was clear that the Northern-based alliance must, inevitably, win the election.

Nevertheless, and despite the evidence of the 1959 elections, the Southern political leaders still persisted in living in a fantasy world as regards the North, whose peoples they had never been able to understand. They still reckoned that they could win forty Northern seats, and with this object in view they dispatched their candidates, each one backed by a lawyer and a posse of toughs. These were followed by Eastern Ministers in their official cars,

each one to an allotted area.² The Southern politicians, even in 1964, could not bring themselves to understand that the Northern millions, so far from awaiting liberation from their traditional leaders, both respected them and were loyal to them. And that their feelings, if any, toward strangers who desired to sap those loyalties, were ones of dislike.

In consequence, the campaign was a failure, and at last Dr. Okpara and Dr. Azikiwe—although, as President, he did not take a direct part—began to see the writing on the wall. There was only one answer. To boycott the elections on grounds of the molestation of candidates and other irregularities on the part of their opponents. For reasons best known to themselves, the NPC were to provide ample evidence. Their total victory was inevitable, but in order, presumably, to achieve a formidable total of unopposed returns, thus providing advance evidence of overwhelming superiority, they caused every possible obstacle to be placed in the way of opposition candidates seeking nomination. A number of these unfortunate men were kidnapped, others were beaten, two so badly that, it was alleged, they died.

Meanwhile, in the West, matters were even worse. Instead of isolated incidents, wholesale thuggery and oppression were the rule, both sides being responsible, though Chief Akintola's supporters, controlling as they did the machinery of government, held a marked advantage.

At this point Dr. Okpara, foreseeing defeat at the polls, glimpsed a ray of hope. Should the election be made void, his lawyers advised, it would be possible for the President to appoint a "caretaker" Prime Minister, at his discretion, pending fresh elections. On the natural assumption that the choice would fall on one of their own people, much could be achieved once the reins were in UPGA hands.

At the end of December the election was held. In the North and in the Mid West all seats where there were rival candidates were duly contested. In the Western Region there was a partial boycott, in the East the boycott was total. On the following day, Dr. Azikiwe made it clear that in his view there had been no

2. For a detailed description of the two censuses and the subsequent elections, I am greatly indebted to John P. Mackintosh, *Nigerian Government and Politics* (London, 1966), chap. xiii, "The Struggle for Power, 1964."

election and that he had no intention of reappointing Sir Abubakar. Sir Abubakar, on the other hand, maintained that his supporters had won a clear victory and that the President had no choice but to appoint him. In any case, the post had never been vacant, and he remained Prime Minister.

The trial of strength had begun. The President had behind him, not only the UPGA leaders and their following, but also the Lagos mob. All now depended on the attitude of the armed forces. Dr. Azikiwe imagined that, as Commander in Chief, the heads of the army, the navy, and the police owed allegiance first to him, and he summoned them to the State House so to inform them. But the service chiefs, themselves, had already taken constitutional advice and had been assured that they were, in fact, obliged to take their orders from the Prime Minister. In the final event, the President gave way, and Sir Abubakar was reappointed and duly formed a "broadly based" government which included a sprinkling of independents, two ex-NCNC Ministers, and two of Chief Akintola's supporters from the West.

And so the crisis passed, leaving so much bitterness in its wake that for a while it seemed as though the federation might dissolve. Then, gradually, things resumed their normal pattern, except in the West, where regional elections held in October gave rise to violence on a hitherto unprecedented scale. The result, a victory for Chief Akintola, was so blatantly rigged that the Action Group supporters, backed by the NCNC, refused to accept the verdict. From then on bands of hired thugs roamed the region at will, burning and looting and attacking, not only political opponents, but any member of the general public whom they felt disposed to rob or murder. Even the Lagos-Ibadan road, the best known in the country, was unsafe.

For the Prime Minister these were unhappy days. In international affairs, in all that mattered most, he was master in his own house, and Nigeria's good name rode high. But at home it was a different matter. Surrounded by corrupt and unscrupulous men, whose greed and ambition clouded whatever there might once have been of wisdom and patriotism, he faced an all but impossible situation. Even among his own Northern Ministers there were few whose hands were wholly clean. Were he to go into re-

tirement, as he must have wished many times, there was no one of comparable caliber to succeed him, and his strong sense of public duty would not let him leave with his task unfinished. The corruption that he saw around him sickened him. But where would he find support in rooting it out? Constitutionally he was tied. Only a direct appeal to the army and to the heads of the Civil Service would serve his purpose. But this would mean revolution followed by dictatorship, and Abubakar was no revolutionary.

It would be wrong, however, to place the blame for corrupt practices at the door of the politicians alone. In the case of certain ministries, for instance, it had become the custom for foreign firms and businessmen to arrange large payments to the ministry concerned. The greater part of such payments went into the party coffers, the lesser into the Minister's pocket. Scarcely a nation and few firms operating in West Africa had a wholly clear record. But this was only a part of the picture. Bribery and lack of scruple could insure the unloading, at great profit, of unsuitable or obsolete plant and stores. The needs of the nation, in fact, took second place to purely personal considerations. The Ministry of Defense was a case in point. Orders for armaments and equipment and agreements for the training of officers and technicians were arranged with a multiplicity of powers regardless of real need.³

By mid-1965, many high-ranking civil servants and army officers had become sickened, as had all decent people, at the violence and bloodshed in the West and at the creeping canker of corruption that was affecting public life. But for a number of middle-ranking army officers, disapproval was not enough. Force alone, it was clear, would rid the country of the politicians whose tribalistic ambitions were tearing it apart, and plans were already being drawn up to resort to force as soon as opportunity offered. By the end of the year it was rumored that, despite the Prime Minister's personal wishes, the army was about to be brought in to suppress the opposition in the West, and this would mean bloodshed on a vaster scale than ever before. The time for action was fast approaching.

3. For summaries of the findings of relevant Commissions of Enquiry into the abuses of the times and for comment on the activities of certain contracting firms, reference is recommended to the various issues of *West Africa* that came out during the period and later.

Two

1966-1967

On Friday, January 15, 1966, the Prime Minister gave an interview to *West Africa*.¹ The Lagos Commonwealth Conference had just closed. For Sir Abubakar it had been a great personal triumph. Now there lay before him the apparently insoluble problem of how to bring peace to the Western Region. Insoluble because, although the Action Group had accepted his offer of mediation, Chief Akintola's party, the party in power, had so far refused, and both the Prime Minister's constitutional position and opposition within his own party precluded an imposed solution. In any case, the use of force was repugnant to him. "If I use real force . . .," he had said, "I could bring the people to their knees. But I do not want to use force like that. Force cannot bring peace to people's hearts."

The interviewer had one final question. "If at any time you retire from public life," she said, "how do you see the problems of transition?" The Prime Minister declined to comment. Within twenty-four hours the question was to be answered for him. The force he so deplored was unleashed with devastating effect that very night. In Kaduna, a part of the garrison, led by a Major Nzeogwu, attacked the Northern Premier's house at two in the morning, killing Sir Ahmadu Bello himself, with one of his wives, and afterward demolishing the house with bazooka fire. The next victim was their own Brigadier, shot to pieces in his bedroom together with his wife. The Northern Head of Security (who, hearing the alarm, had driven up to find out what was happening), a colonel, and a number of policemen and servants who, by doing their duty, had got in the way were also murdered. Another group broke into Government House and took the Governor, Sir Kashim Ibrahim, into custody.

1. Interview given to Bridget Bloom, Commercial Editor of *West Africa*, in issue of Jan. 29, 1966.

In Ibadan, a similar scene was enacted with Chief Akintola, the Premier, the principal target. In Lagos itself the conspirators first applied themselves to eliminating the more senior among their unsuspecting Northern brother officers. Maimallari, the Brigadier, and four Colonels—one of them Jack Pam, a Christian Birom and once my A.D.C.—and other officers were sought out and shot. Jack Pam had managed to warn Ironsi, the G.O.C., who took refuge at Police Headquarters, before he himself was killed.

Next, a little before dawn, a party forced their way into the Prime Minister's residence. Abubakar, accepting the inevitable, insisted first on saying his prayers. Then only he allowed himself to be led away. The story, later put around, was that he was to be held as a hostage pending the release of Awolowo. But when his body was later found, he had died by gunfire. Okotie Eboh, the Finance Minister, had also been taken away and shot.

By now the alarm had gone out; loyal troops were rushed into the center of Lagos and order was restored. Meanwhile, in Kano and Enugu, and later in Benin, the capital of the Mid West, troops had occupied key points, on orders from the mutineers who had seized control, during the night, of the army signals network. In Kano, the airport was occupied, and in Enugu, Government House and the Premier's residence were surrounded. But there was no violence.

In Kaduna, Nzeogwu, speaking for the mutineers, claimed that their purpose was to liberate Nigeria from the politicians whose tribalistic policies had split the country. Whatever there might have been, however, of warped idealism in the minds of some, the course of events in Lagos and the absence of violence in Enugu—where Okpara, the Eastern Premier, was allegedly on the list of victims—showed plainly that other motives had played a part in the course of events. It was noted, for instance, that almost all the victims were Northerners and their Yoruba allies, while the killers, with few exceptions, came from the East. It seems clear that there were more plots than one, that the killers were not all of one mind, and that some of them were unconsciously playing someone else's game as well as their own. However, we are too close to events for detailed diagnosis. Equally, it would

be inappropriate, in this book, to record more than a general outline of what happened on that night of tragedies and later.

Once the killing was over in Kaduna, Nzeogwu and his following seemed to have had no clear idea of what to do. To begin with, a number of Ministers were pulled in for questioning. While they groveled in terror, the Governor, Sir Kashim Ibrahim, himself under arrest, sat aloof and contemptuous in a corner of the room. Later in the day, contact was made with senior civil servants, and on the following morning the conduct of affairs was handed over to Ali Akilu, the Head of the Civil Service and the Permanent Secretaries. Meanwhile the Governor had been released.

In Lagos, on the Monday morning, General Ironsi, on the "invitation" of those Federal Ministers who had not fled the capital, took over the country and formed a military government. His first act was to suspend the constitution and the principal officers of state. Instead, Military Governors were appointed to the former regions, the Northern Governor being Major Hassan Katsina, the son of the Emir. Sir Kashim Ibrahim was named as his adviser.

Throughout the country there was deep grief at Abubakar's death and, in the North, shock and resentment at the murder of their leading soldiers. But these matters apart, the immediate reaction was one of relief, and even of elation, at the rout of the politicians. For Akintola and Sardauna, there were, at the time, few tears. Far fewer than Sardauna, at least, deserved. For all the grave errors of recent times, he had done great things for the North, and under his leadership its peoples, the Tiv apart, had greatly prospered. But in recent months he had become withdrawn. In outward attitudes he seemed to have moved backward in time. His official entertainment, for instance, was now in Arabian style, with his guests seated on cushions instead of chairs.

In the past a remarkable degree of tolerance had been achieved in the North. But now this was threatened. For some months Sardauna had engaged himself in a campaign of militant proselytism for Islam. Mass conversions had become the order of the day, his lieutenants in the provinces striving to maintain themselves in favor by the vigor of their efforts and the impact of their sta-

tistical returns. That a high proportion of these "conversions" were illusory was irrelevant. For some while, Sardauna had nursed a premonition that he was destined for a violent end. He had always been a man with a conscience, and maybe the errors of his public and private life were weighing on him. His conversion campaign was, perhaps, his way of making his peace with his Maker and of preparing for himself a way to the world to come.

For the first months after the coup, the North, shocked and dazed by the violence of events, slowly began to take stock. In Kaduna the Permanent Secretaries and in the provinces the Provincial Secretaries—a number of them, in both instances, British—insured that the wheels of government continued to turn. In the meantime, the Military Governor toured widely and did his best to restore confidence and plan for the future. Plainly, there could be no return to the old regionalism. Minds therefore began to turn to the old "Twelve Pillars" Policy, and a committee was set up to see whether it could be adapted to present needs.

In Lagos, the federal military government was broadly based in composition, but in the background other influences were at work, and Ironsi's policies were largely dictated by a group of fellow Ibos, civil servants and intellectuals, in positions of power. Tactless decisions were made and promotions and appointments were proposed, all of which seemed to bode ill for the North.

In the region itself, matters were not helped by the attitude of the Ibo themselves. There was loud and widespread boasting that they, the Ibo, were now the masters, and pictures of Nzeogwu were openly displayed. To the North, Nzeogwu, now under arrest with other participants in the mutiny, was the man who had murdered their leader and who had been responsible for the death of other Northerners, both soldiers and civilians. Why was he not brought to trial? But in the East he was a national hero.

Although the Northernization policy had enabled the Northern Public Service to remain predominantly Northern in composition, things were far different in the federal Service departments operating in the region and, even more so, in the statutory corporations, in the banks and commercial houses, and in trade and transport. Here the enterprising, thrustful Ibo, with their superior expertise, swarmed in thousands. Ordinary Northerners

were fearful and resentful. When their own regional government had been master in its own house matters could be controlled. What would happen now?

Then came what appeared to be the final blow. On May 23, General Ironsi in a broadcast formally announced the dissolution of the federation, the abolition of the four regions, the unification of the Civil Service, and the banning of all political parties. There were reservations and other measures too, of obvious social and economic benefit to all. But what bit were the political decisions. Trouble first began with student demonstrations in Zaria and Kano. Then, over the weekend, in all the large towns the mob was let loose, its fury fanned, it was widely claimed, by the dispossessed politicians who still had party funds in their possession. By the time order had been restored, the Ibo death roll ran into hundreds and the trail of destruction was terrific.

For a few weeks life returned to normal, with both sides, particularly in the army, eyeing each other with suspicion. Rumors spread rapidly. On the one hand, it was said that the Northerners were planning to revenge their murdered officers; on the other, there were whispers that on a specified day the Ibo intended to complete the work begun on January 16. Then, in the early hours of July 29, Northern N.C.O.'s in Abeokuta, suspecting trouble in the morning, decided to strike first. Within minutes the news was flashed to other garrison towns, and by nightfall all Ibo officers and men were either dead or in hiding. By coincidence, or maybe not, the mutiny broke out when General Ironsi was in Ibadan, staying with the very popular Military Governor, Brigadier Fajuyi. Both were taken away and shot.

After three days of negotiations in Lagos, Lieutenant Colonel Gowon, a Christian from one of the minority tribes in the North, who by sheer luck had escaped the January killings, was persuaded to take over. An essentially modest, moderate man, he was by far the best equipped to assume the appalling responsibility of holding the nation together and restoring discipline in the army.

One of his earliest acts was to release Chiefs Awolowo and Enahoro and other politicians under detention and to make preparations for an All Nigeria Conference designed to ease tension and to bring the opposing parties together. The conference took

place on September 12, and certain progress was made, but matters were not eased by acts of Ibo-inspired sabotage, fortunately minimized, as regards one of the more sensational undertakings, by the protagonist's blowing himself up.

Rumors, however, were still spreading, and though the July outbreaks had been fortunately confined to the army, the civil population in the North was very much on edge. During August and September there had been retaliatory attacks on the relatively small colonies of Northerners in the Eastern Region and many had been killed. Then, on September 29, the worst outbreak of all took place. It had been whispered that the Ibo were planning to strike again and that a list had been prepared of key civil servants and businessmen, including Europeans, who were to be liquidated on a given day. Seen from a distance the story seems unlikely. But it was widely believed, and, again, anticipatory action was taken.

This time it seemed as though a collective frenzy had taken possession of men's minds, fanned and channeled, according to eyewitnesses, by the same men who had been at the back of the riots of the previous May and with the police and army largely declining to intervene and, on occasion, actively participating. More united than ever before, irrespective of religion or tribe, the people of the North appeared determined to rid themselves, once and for all, of the Ibo in their midst. This they did bloodily and barbarously. For days the unhappy Ibo were systematically hunted down like animals and killed. Thousands perished, and property on a vast scale was looted or destroyed. What happened was utterly inexcusable. But there is still a need to understand. Throughout history, peoples believing themselves in grave peril have done terrible things. And there is no question of the reality of Northern apprehensions of Ibo intentions or, after the ruthless killings of January, 1966, of their will to put them into effect.

And there was another side. There were Northerners who did their best, risking and even losing their lives in the process, to halt the killings or to save the lives of intended victims. The Sultan in Sokoto and the Emir in Katsina had intervened personally, only to be driven away by the maddened mob, an occurrence that would have been utterly unthinkable a few years earlier.

After the massacres, a vast exodus took place, and Ibo demands for permanent separation from the rest of the federation grew in intensity. Lieutenant Colonel Ojukwu, Military Governor of the East from the early days of the Ironsi regime, appeared to be bent on secession, although a meeting of leaders at Aburi in Ghana, sponsored by the Ghana regime, gave rise to hope for a while. But Ojukwu was still not satisfied, and each concession by Lagos was followed by further demands.

Thereafter followed a number of hostile acts. Federal revenues were appropriated and federal institutions were seized. Finally, on May 30, 1967, Ojukwu, rendered confident by his control of Nigeria's oil supplies and apparently expecting that other African countries would recognize him, proclaimed the independent Republic of Biafra. For some time he had been smuggling in arms and equipment for his troops and arranging to acquire aircraft. These measures he now greatly intensified. But as regards recognition he was to be disappointed. The legalities apart, secession was something that no African state could afford to condone; there was scarcely one that did not have its own minorities problem, as, for that matter, had Biafra itself.²

The federal government could not possibly accept either the dismemberment of the federation or—even less so—the existence on its borders of an independent state with the dire potentialities for mischief that an oil-rich and revengeful East would undoubtedly possess. And so, all efforts at a peaceful solution having failed, on July 6, 1967, federal troops invaded Biafra.

2. On the evening that the Eastern Consultative Assembly gave a mandate to Ojukwu to proclaim secession, Colonel Gowon announced a decree dividing Nigeria into twelve states to "remove the fear of domination." The North would be divided into six states, the East into three, and the West into three—West, Midwest, and Lagos.

Three

L'ENVOI

And so I come to the end of my story and to the end of the story of the Service to which we were all so proud to belong. To-day that Service, its mission completed, is little more than a memory. But we have our compensation. When Britain first went to Nigeria she brought peace where there had been war and justice where there had been oppression, and, to quote again the generous words of the late Premier of the former Western Region, she used her "imperial power to weld together a number of people who would otherwise have remained to this day as warring tribal groups." In so doing, she created a nation.

Now, civil war has come again and the nation's ability to survive is in question. But this time national unity is the goal, and the cry of "One Nigeria" means far more today than in the years of relative euphoria that immediately followed independence.

The sorry story of those years, combined with the wholesale collapse of democratic government throughout the former British and French colonial territories in Africa, has caused doubts to be raised as to African capacity for self-rule. But neither Nigerians nor the citizens of any newly independent African state should be judged by the misdeeds of a group of corrupt and discredited politicians during the early years of nationhood.

What has seemed most significant about the tragic events of 1966 in Nigeria in general—though I am writing particularly of the North, of which I have the most knowledge—has been that despite the many acts of violence, the arson and the killings, and despite the mass exodus of key personnel, the general administrative breakdown so confidently predicted never took place. The Courts of Justice and the Civil Service—and here is where the main strength of the country lies—continued to function, newspapers appeared on the streets, banks and shops soon reopened their doors, and the public services, if slowly and fitfully at first,

continued to operate. Finally, the most important of all, the Nigeria Police, a federal force, stood firm, apart from one or two grave lapses.

The politicians, on the other hand, had been in many cases men of straw, despite their spurious reputation abroad. As that distinguished West Indian authority, Sir Arthur Lewis has observed in his *Politics in West Africa*,¹ which gives a highly forthright assessment of West African politics during the early years of independence, "Almost any charming rogue can get himself written up in the journals of the western world."² The standards of public conduct that these men failed to maintain had been largely alien in origin and concept, and until they passed all bounds of decency, public opinion had not been ready to call a halt. Those times have now changed, and the long series of public inquiries and commissions into the financial records of former Ministers and other public men should make it clear to the politicians of the future that the corrupt practices of earlier years are best avoided.

Alien, too, was the concept of a Western-style parliamentary opposition. Accepted at first as one of the inescapable accompaniments of parliamentary government, it soon became suspect. It constituted after all, in theory at least, the nucleus of an alternative government. Thus, once those in power had tasted to the full the fruits of office, in their infinite variety, they did their best to insure by all available means that they should never have to surrender that power. Which fact carried the inevitable corollary that, for those in opposition, force alone could secure change. Then, when to human greed and ambition there were added the explosive forces of tribalism, the future for ordinary men and women began to look bleak.

Elsewhere in Africa, the idea of the one-party state has taken root. However distasteful such an idea may be to Western minds, even when accompanied by an independent judiciary and a free press, it is not our business. Should Nigerians decide that it is best suited for their purpose, it would be for them to say.

However that may be, it will be upon personalities, not pol-

1. (Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press, 1965).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

icies, that the future of Nigeria will depend. Any country, in any age, can produce its demagogues, but national leaders of integrity and vision occur less frequently in history. In Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria produced a statesman of international repute. If only there had been others ready to face the fact that any attempt by one ethnic group to dominate the whole—by infiltration or by force or by the power of the ballot box—would spell national disaster, much misery might have been saved.

And now, with 1968 drawing to a close, it looks as if the end of the fighting may not be far away. And when peace talks begin, the replacement, earlier in the year, of the four regions by twelve states should have removed the major source of mutual distrust. Ironically, however, the Ibo, the original proponents of the idea, are now, it seems, the sole opponents. Britain has from time to time been criticized for leaving Nigeria with one region, the North, larger and more populous than the remainder combined. It is forgotten that to the North numerical advantage was the sole defense against political and economic domination by the more advanced South and that, without this defense, nothing would have persuaded them to become partners in an independent Nigeria.

The constitution-makers of tomorrow will start with another advantage over their predecessors of the fifties, the advantage of knowing from experience what to accept and what to reject where Western democratic practices and procedures are in question. In the first decades of the century, distance alone had insured that colonial governments in Africa operated largely in isolation. But when air travel narrowed the gap between London and Lagos and its hinterland from weeks to hours, experts began to arrive in an unceasing stream. In the field of education and medicine, in particular, nothing but good eventuated; but where political and social problems were involved, the advantage was not always so obvious. Thus we who lived close to the people were to find ourselves, on occasion, pushed in directions that our experience told us were suspect, at a rate that appeared to be unwise. Few outside critics seemed to appreciate that. Sir Arthur Lewis again: "Africans differ more from each other than Europeans or Asians differ from each other. . . . In Africa . . . one can find within a hun-

dred miles two tribes whose thought patterns differ from each other more fundamentally than those of France and Germany, or those of Burma and Ceylon.”³ Yet the same social and political remedies were advocated for each and every situation, irrespective of local circumstances and susceptibilities. In consequence, the complete apparatus of government as practiced throughout the United Kingdom was advocated and largely accepted. Now it is possible to think again.

In 1964, on the occasion of the annual dinner of the Britain-Nigeria Association, the toast to British-Nigerian friendship was proposed by Sir Alec Douglas Home, then Prime Minister. In the course of his reply, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa stressed that one day Nigeria would make mistakes and it would be then that she would stand in greatest need of friendship. Now is that time, and it is fair to ask whether, on both sides of the Atlantic, either the politicians or the press, with honorable exceptions, have fully afforded that friendship.

Ungrudging friendship, on the other hand, has come, as far as the North has been concerned, from Christian missions, whose selfless labors in the schools and hospitals have never ceased, in good times and in bad. It has come also from volunteers from overseas, but, in particular, from a small devoted band of former British civil servants and police officers still in the service of the local government. These men, in moments of crisis, stepped into the breach where most needed. But theirs is another story.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

MAPS, APPENDIXES, INDEX

MAPS

Nigeria, 1900

At the turn of the century the railway only ran as far as Ibadan, and the main highways to the north lay along the two great waterways, the Niger and the Benue, and along the lower reaches of certain of their main tributaries. The Royal Niger Company had established trading stations along both waterways. Order had been maintained by the Royal Niger Constabulary. Upcountry the company's writ did not normally run for much more than a day's march inland from the rivers, and even then it was often transient only. In 1897 an imperial force, the West African Frontier Force, had been raised with the future Lord Lugard as Commandant. By 1900 Headquarters was at Zungeru with one battalion at Wushishi and one at Jebba.

The Hausa States and the Fulani Empire

Within the confines of the empire there were many areas of permanent resistance, particularly in the country of the hill pagans north of the Benue and in Kebbi, which, a brief interval apart, maintained its independence right up to the British occupation. From Adamawa the Fulani horse ranged far and wide. In the twenties there were pagan hill villages near Bamenda in the British sphere nearly two hundred miles south of Banyo, where crude drawings of horses could be seen commemorating the raids of the previous century.

Sokoto Province: Early 1930's

Roads are shown as either main roads or dry season roads or tracks. In actuality, during those early years, sections of many of these main roads were impassable for long periods during the rainy season. In October, 1930, I was compelled to travel to Yelwa by canoe. Two months later I covered most, and could have covered all, of the route by car.

*Northern Nigeria in the Mid-Fifties:
Table of Native Administrations*

Province	Area in square miles	Division	Native Administration	Key Number	Population
Sokoto	36,500	Sokoto	Sokoto Emirate	1	2,021,000
....		Gwandu	Gwandu Emirate	2	489,000
....		....	Yauri Emirate	4	171,000
		Argungu	Argungu Emirate	3	
Total:					2,681,000
Katsina	9,500	Katsina	Katsina Emirate	5	1,483,000
....		....	Daura Emirate	6	
Total:					1,483,000
Kano	16,600	Kano	Kano Emirate	7	2,973,000
....		....	Kazaure Emirate	8	
....		Northern	Hadejia Emirate	9	424,000
		....	Gumel Emirate	10	
Total:					3,397,000
Bornu	45,700	Bornu	Bornu Emirate	11	1,006,000
....		Dikwa	Dikwa Emirate	12	265,000
....		Biu	Biu Emirate	13	
		....	Shani and Askira Chiefdoms		165,000
....		Fika	Fika Emirate	14	115,000
....		Bedde	Bedde Emirate	15	45,000
Total:					1,596,000
Adamawa	31,800	Adamawa	Adamawa Emirate	16	799,000
....		Numan	Numan Federation	17	121,000
....		Muri	Muri Emirate	18	260,000
Total:					1,180,000
Bauchi	26,100	Bauchi	Bauchi Emirate	19	512,000
....		....	Ningi Chiefdom	24	
....		Gombe	Gombe Emirate	20	477,000
....		....	Tangale Waja Federation	25	
....		Katagum	Katagum Emirate	21	
		....	Misau Emirate	22	434,000
		....	Jema'ari Emirate	31	65,000
Total:					1,423,000

Northern Nigeria in the Mid-Fifties

Plateau	12,400	Jos	Birom Chief and Council	26	254,000
....		Lowland (Shendam)	Lowland Federation	27	194,000
....		....	Wase Emirate	32	
....		Pankshin	Pankshin Federation	28	279,000
....		....	Kanam Chief and Council	30	
....		Southern	Akwanga Federation	29	98,000
....		Jema'a	Jema'a Emirate	31	65,000
Total:					890,000
Zaria	16,500	Zaria	Zaria Emirate	33	
....		....	Birnin Gwari Chiefdom	34	
....		....	Kagoro Chiefdom	35	806,000
....		....	Moroa Chiefdom	36	
....		....	Jaba Chiefdom	37	
Total:					806,000
Niger	28,700	Bida	Bida Emirate	38	222,000
....		....	Agaie Emirate	41	
....		Abuja	Abuja Emirate	39	101,000
....		....	Lapai Emirate	42	
....		Kontagora	Kontagora Emirate	40	
			Wushishi Chiefdom		251,000
			Zuru Chief and Council	45	
....		Minna	Gwari Federation	43	142,000
		....	Kamuku Council	44	
Total:					716,000
Ilorin	17,600	Ilorin	Ilorin Emirate	46	399,000
....		Lafiagi	Lafiagi Federation	47	
		Pategi	Pategi Emirate	49	56,000
....		Borgu	Borgu Emirate	48	76,000
Total:					531,000
Kabba	11,000	Igbirra	Igbirra Chiefdom	50	157,000
....		Kabba	Kabba Chiefdoms (5)	51	110,000
....		Kwara	Kwara Federation	52	33,000
....		Igala	Igala Chiefdom	54	
		....	Bassa Komo Chiefdom	53	364,000
Total:					664,000

Northern Nigeria in the Mid-Fifties

Benue	30,000	Idoma	Idoma Chiefdom	55	319,000
....		Lafia	Lafia Emirate	56	
....		....	Awe Chiefdom		132,000
....		Nassarawa	Nassarawa Emirate	57	
		....	Keffi Emirate	58	162,000
....		Tiv	Tiv Chief and Council	59	719,000
....		Wukari	Wukari Federation	60	137,000
				Total:	1,469,000

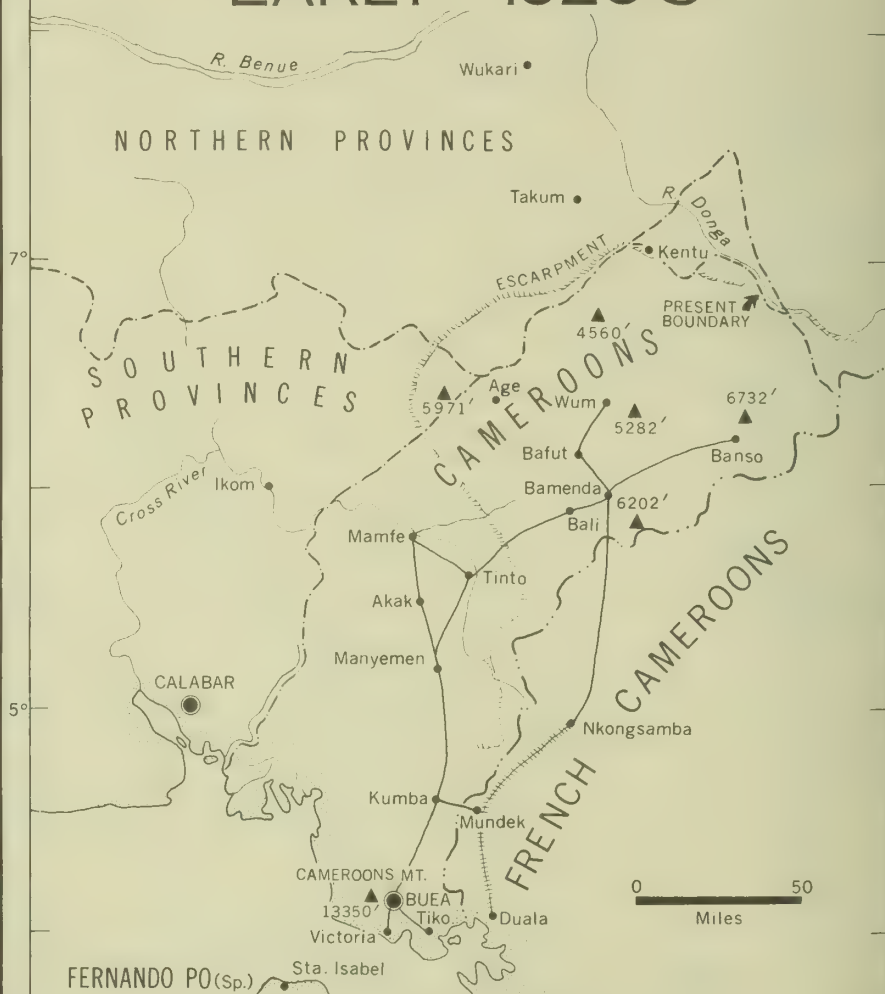
Population Density of Northern Nigeria: 60 per square mile

Grand Total: 16,836,000

NIGERIA IN 1900



CAMEROONS PROVINCE: EARLY 1920'S



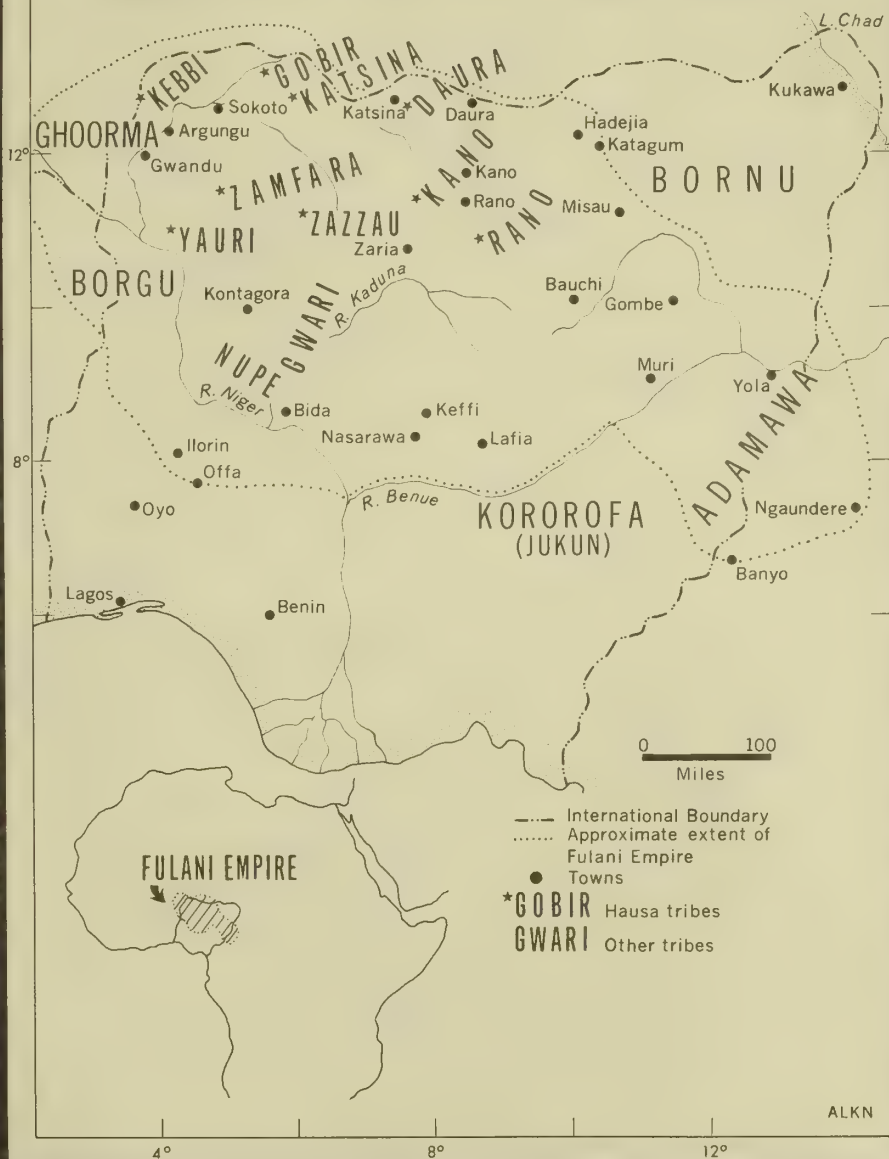
- International Boundary
- Regional Boundary
- Provincial Boundary
- Main Roads
- ⋯ Railways
- Provincial Headquarters
- ▲ Mountains
- Trek Routes:
Buea—Mamfe, 14 days
Mamfe—Bamenda, 6 days

ALKN

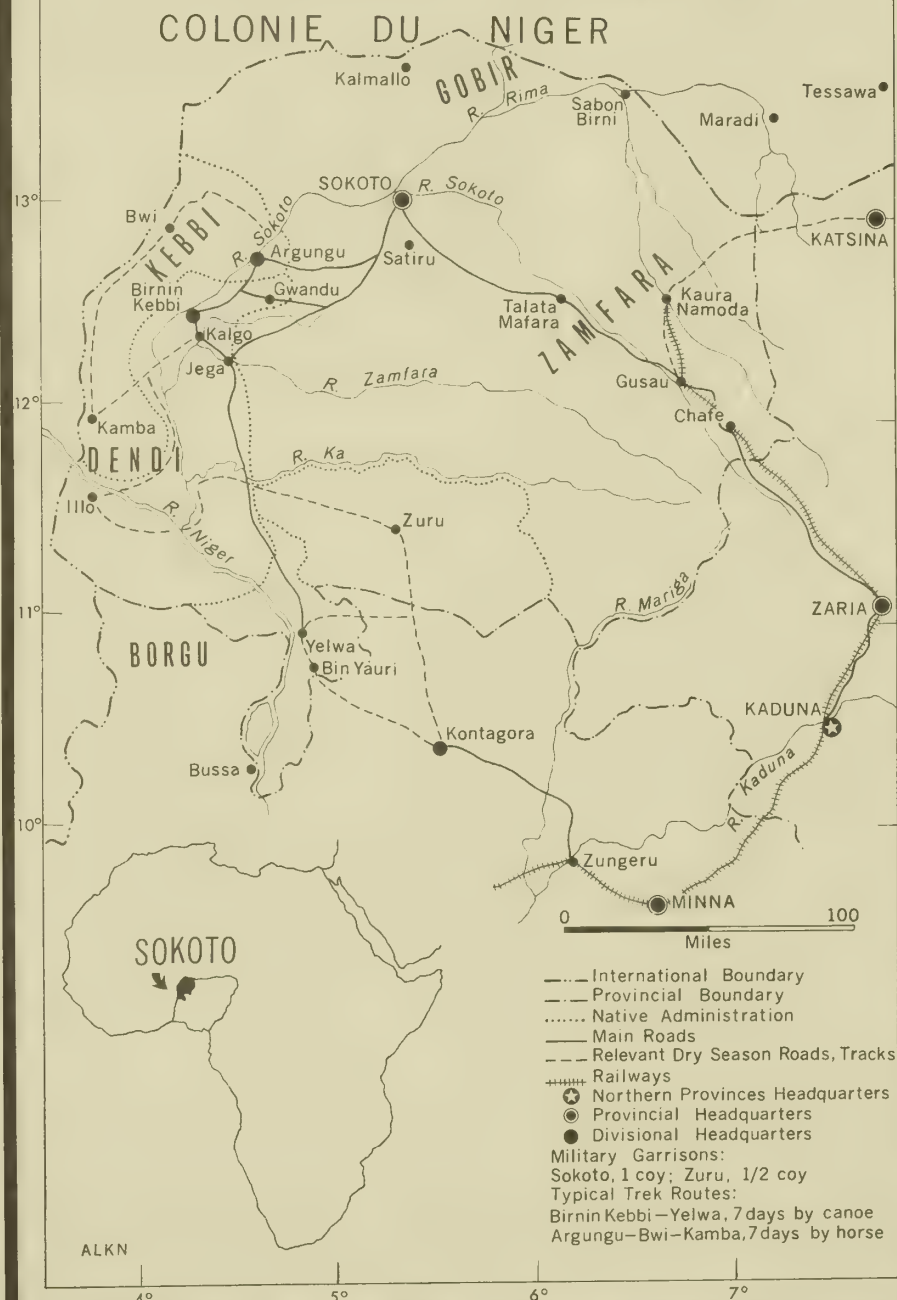
8°

10°

FULANI EMPIRE: MID-19TH CENTURY



SOKOTO PROVINCE: EARLY 1930'S



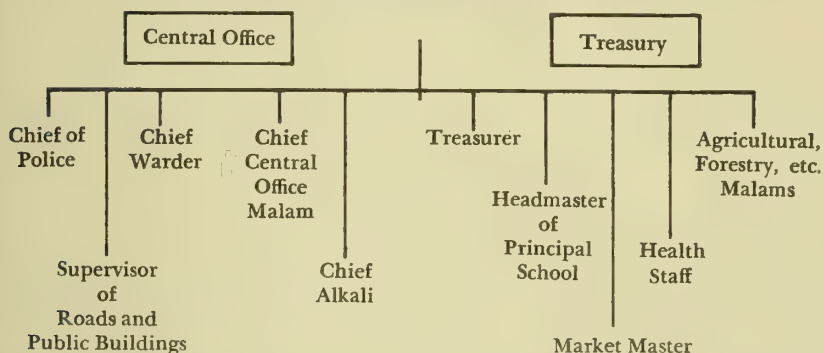
Appendix 1

NATIVE ADMINISTRATIONS OF NORTHERN NIGERIA IN THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

A. Headquarters Organization of a Typical Emirate in the Late Twenties

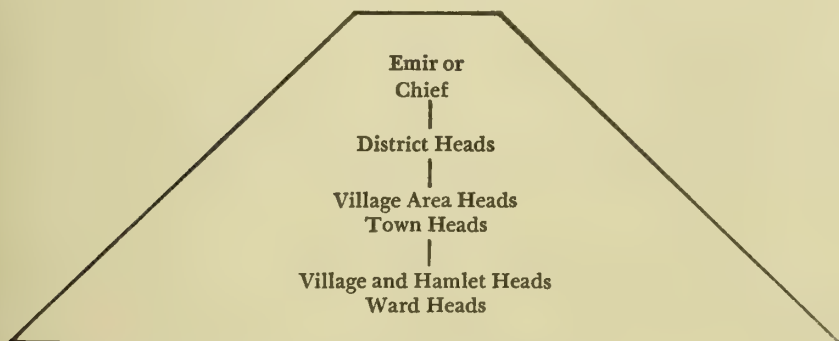
Emir

Advised by a council consisting of a Waziri, or chief councilor, the Chief Alkali, the Treasurer, and four or five traditional councilors with no specific duties.

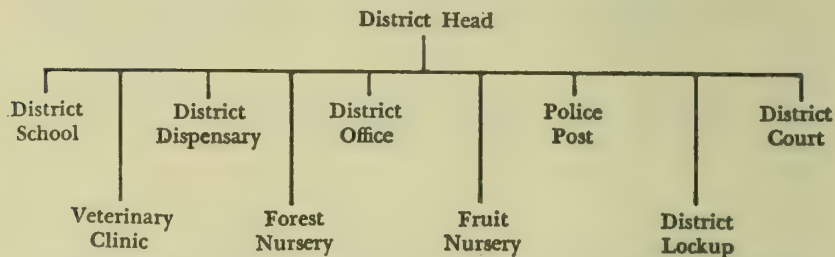


Note: While it was usual for an emir to heed the advice of his council, he was until 1952 in no way legally bound to do so, and from time to time occasions arose when, unless the District Officer or Resident intervened, the council would find itself pushed aside by favorites.

B. Chain of Responsibility



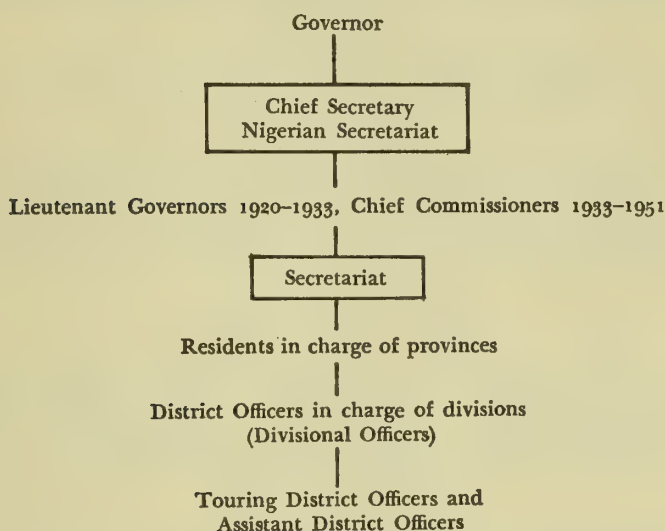
Note: The word "chief" here implies a non-Muslim.

C. District Headquarters Organization (optimum)

Note: By the late twenties there was little more than an embryonic District Office and an Alkali's Court and Lockup. Thereafter followed, very gradually, as we acquired the staff and the funds, first, the school and the dispensary and, not until the forties and only in the largest districts, the remainder.

Appendix 2

NIGERIA 1920-1951: ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION



Note: In the North Residents normally resided at the headquarters of the largest emirate. There were usually two to four divisions in each province, including the headquarters division, and one or more native administrations (emirates, chiefdoms, or federations) in each division. The word "district" in "District Officer" had no territorial connotation. A territorial district was a subdivision of an emirate, etc.

The heads of the professional and technical departments of government, i.e., the Director of Medical Services, the Director of Education, the Director of Public Works, etc., normally resided at Lagos, the seat of government, and answered directly to the Governor. Their Deputy Heads normally resided at the regional capital and were answerable to the Lieutenant Governor in everyday affairs, subject to conformity with the policies laid down for them by their departmental heads to whom they had direct access.

Departmental officers in the provinces answered directly to their departmental superiors in all matters connected with their departmental duties. On the other hand, although he was not entitled to interfere in any way in professional or technical matters, the Resident was responsible for his province and everything that went on in it, and the District Officer was in the same position as regards his division. In the event of calamity or an outbreak of violence it was the Resident or the District Officer who had to take charge at once and face the music if anything went wrong. Therefore, it was their duty to co-ordinate effort and do their best to insure that all servants of government worked together harmoniously as a team.

Appendix 3

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN NIGERIA 1946-1957 AS THEY AFFECTED THE NORTHERN REGION

A. The "Richards Constitution" 1946-1951

1. *Principal Innovations*

For the first time Nigerians from the North became members of the Central Legislature and, in that the legislature sat at the capital Lagos and at the three regional capitals in turn, legislators could observe on the spot how their colleagues in other regions lived and gain a better idea of what their problems were, the three groups of provinces now being known as regions.

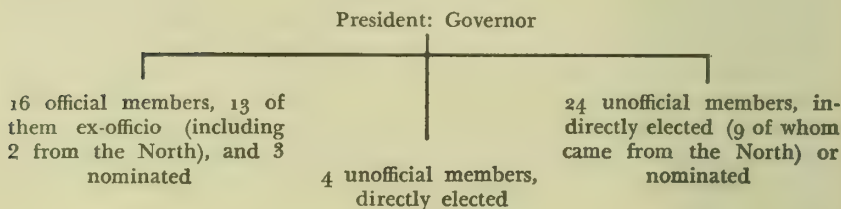
2. *Central Executive*

Governor

Advised, as in the past, by an Executive Council consisting almost entirely of officials, among whom were the three Chief Commissioners of the regions. The only exceptions were two recently appointed Nigerian non-officials.

3. *Central Legislature*

Legislative Council



Responsibilities

To legislate in all matters concerning Nigeria, to appropriate revenue and to scrutinize and pass the annual budget.

4. *Northern Regional Executive*

Chief Commissioner,
acting on behalf of the Governor

5. Northern Regional Council

*Upper Chamber**Northern House of Chiefs*

President: Chief Commissioner

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graph TD
    A[Northern House of Chiefs] --- B[President: Chief Commissioner]
    B --- C[The principal chiefs of the region, 22 in number]
    C --- D[Lower Chamber]
    D --- E[Northern House of Assembly]
    E --- F[President: Senior Resident]
    F --- G[18 official members]
    F --- H[15 unofficial members]
    F --- I[6 unofficial members]
    G --- G1[Secretary, Northern Provinces, Secretary, Finance, Senior Crown Counsel, principal heads of departments, Residents)
    H --- H1[termed provincial members, selected by the chiefs and their councils]
    I --- I1[appointed by the Governor to represent special interests]
  
```

The principal chiefs of the region, 22 in number

*Lower Chamber**Northern House of Assembly*

President: Senior Resident

18 official members (Secretary, Northern Provinces, Secretary, Finance, Senior Crown Counsel, principal heads of departments, Residents)

15 unofficial members, termed provincial members, selected by the chiefs and their councils

6 unofficial members appointed by the Governor to represent special interests

Responsibilities

To advise the Governor on any matter referred by him to them or to consider and advise on any matter introduced by a member of the House. To scrutinize the annual estimates of expenditure for the region and to debate and advise concerning proposed legislation affecting the region due to come before Legislative Council. Neither chamber had any legislative powers.

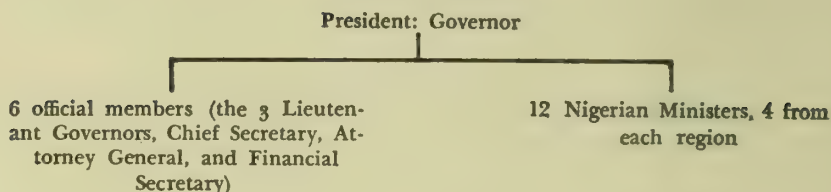
Note: To all intents and purposes the official members were all British officials and the unofficial members, the commercial and mining members apart, were all Nigerian. The unofficial members of the Central Legislature were all elected by the Regional Houses from among their own number, i.e., they sat in both Houses, central and regional.

B. The "Macpherson Constitution" 1951-1954*1. Principal Innovations*

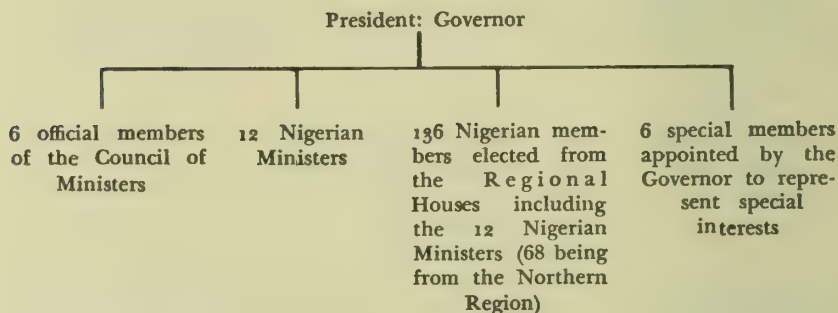
For the first time, (i) elections were held throughout the country, (ii) by the creation of Ministers Nigerians actively participated in the government of their country, (iii) regions were empowered to make laws, subject to the overriding approval of the Governor. The post of Chief Commissioner was abolished and the post of Lieutenant Governor was re-created in its stead.

Appendix 3

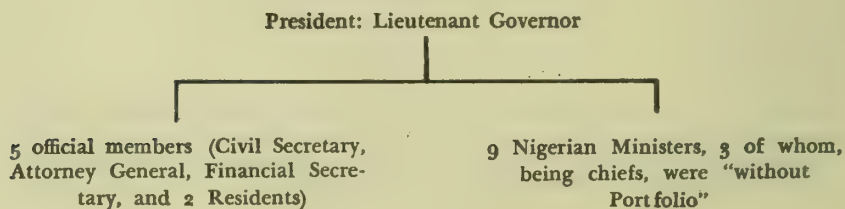
2. Central Executive

Council of Ministers*Function*

To be the principal policy-making body for Nigeria.

*Central Legislature**House of Representatives**Function*

To legislate on all subjects and to scrutinize and pass the national budget.

4. *Regional Executive, Northern Region**Executive Council*

Function

To be the principal policy-making body for the region.

5. *Regional Legislature, Northern Region**Upper Chamber**Northern House of Chiefs*

President: Lieutenant Governor



The official and the Nigerian members of Executive Council

50 principal chiefs, an adviser on Muslim law

*Lower Chamber**Northern House of Assembly*

President: Senior Resident



Civil Secretary,
Legal Secretary,
Financial Secretary

Nigerian Regional
Ministers

90 elected members, 10 special members
including the Central and Regional
Ministers

Functions

To legislate on matters specifically the concern of the region, i.e., education, local government, natural resources, public works, public health, etc., and to scrutinize and pass the regional budget.

Note: Revenues accruing to the regions would now greatly exceed what had been allotted under the old constitution. In addition to what they raised themselves, the central government would make substantial grants based on amounts paid within the region in indirect taxation, on the number of taxpayers in the region and would pay outright for education and police. Finally, in recognition of past neglect on the part of the old central government, there would be a block capital grant to the North of £2 million. Summarized, despite a considerable advance on the part of the regions toward internal autonomy, the central government by its overall control over finance and legislation still remained in a predominating position.

**C. The Federal Constitution 1954—
(The "Lyttleton Constitution")**

1. Principal Innovations

(i) The Governor of Nigeria became a Governor General, Regional Lieutenant Governors became full Governors, the leading Minister in each region became Premier, all in recognition of political progress and enhanced responsibilities. For the same reason Regional Legal Secretaries now became Attorneys General. Regional Governors now dealt directly with the Secretary of State, except in federal matters. (ii) The Eastern and Western Regions dispensed entirely with all British officials on Executive Council. The North, on the other hand, preferred to move more deliberately and retained the Civil Secretary, the Attorney General, and the Financial Secretary, dispensing only with the two Residents. (iii) Lagos, which had hitherto been administered as a part of the Western Region, now became federal territory. (iv) The regions established their own High Courts of Justice and their own Public Services. (v) The powers and authority of the regions were very considerably extended at the expense of the center. (vi) Lieutenant Governors, now Governors, disappeared from the Council of Ministers, and the members of the House of Representatives, from which the Federal Ministers were drawn, were elected directly in separate federal elections.

2. Central Executive

Council of Ministers

President: Governor General



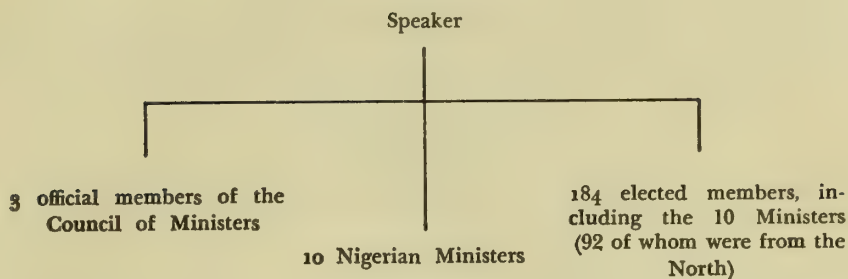
3 official members (Chief Secretary, Attorney General, and Financial Secretary)

10 Nigerian Ministers, 3 from each region and 1 from the Southern Cameroons (now accorded trust territory, regional status)

Functions

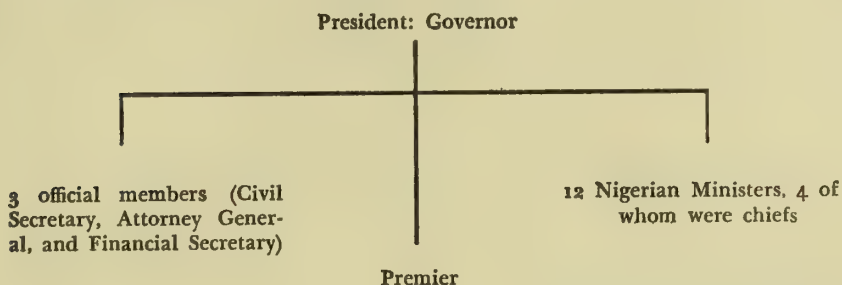
Control over regions in regional legislation and other matters now removed. Otherwise, basically no change.

3. Central Legislature

*Functions*

Apart from the removal of control over regional legislatures, functions basically as before.

4. Regional Executive, Northern Region

Executive Council*Functions*

Increased very considerably in scope owing to enhanced status of region.

5. Northern Regional Legislature

*Upper Chamber**Northern House of Chiefs*

President: Governor

All members of Executive Council, official and non-official

An Adviser on Muslim law

50 chiefs, including chiefly members of Executive Council

*Lower Chamber**Northern House of Assembly*

President: Appointed by the Governor

All official and non-official members of Executive Council, excluding the chiefly members

Up to 5 special members

131 elected members, including the elected non-official members of Executive Council

Functions

To legislate on all matters not exclusively restricted to the federal legislature, i.e., defense, customs, aviation, telecommunications, etc. Budgetary competence no longer subject to central government control; otherwise, as before.

6. Northern Regional High Court of Justice

While a Federal Supreme Court remained the court of highest jurisdiction in Nigeria, each region now had its own High Court with its own Chief Justice and Bench of Judges.

7. Northern Regional Public Service

The Public Service of Nigeria was divided into a Federal Public Service and three Regional Public Services under the control of the Governor General or the appropriate Regional Governor, each advised by a Public Service Commission.

D. The Nigerian Constitutional Conference 1957

*Under the Chairmanship of Mr. Lennox Boyd,
Secretary of State*

Principal Decisions Directly and Indirectly Affecting Northern Region

- (i) Nigeria to be granted independence in 1960, subject to certain reservations.
- (ii) Western and Eastern Regions to become self-governing in 1957.
- (iii) Northern Region to demand self-government in 1959.
- (iv) The office of Prime Minister of the Federation to be created and all three official members to disappear from Council of Ministers.
- (v) Civil Secretary and Financial Secretary to disappear from Northern Region Executive Council, British Attorney General to remain. Additional Nigerian Ministers to be appointed.
- (vi) Northern House of Assembly to be increased from 131 to 170 and House of Chiefs from 50 to 62.

Appendix 4

GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION OF PERSONAL AND PLACE NAMES AND GLOSSARY OF TRIBAL NAMES, TITLES, AND WORDS IN COMMON USAGE.

PRONUNCIATION KEY*

Vowels

a	cat, Aliyu	o	lot, Kontagora (kontagōra), Sokoto (sokatōō)
ah	father, Kano (kahno), Zaria (zahria), Baro (bahro)	oo	soot
ā	rate, Lagos (lāgos)	ōō	soon, Abubakar (abōōbakar)
e	tell, Enugu (enōōgōō)	ō	wrote, Yola (yōla)
ē	see, Bida (bēda)	ōr	sore, Kontagora (kontagōra)
i	hit, Ilorin (ilōrin)	u	nut
ī	kite	ū	tune

Diphthongs and some consonants

au	house (though in correct Hausa both vowels are sounded, the first slurring into the second), Hausa, Sardauna	ai	site, Yaki (yaiki)
		s	house, Hausa
		ch	church, Chiroma (though in modern spelling <i>ch</i> has been replaced by <i>c</i> , Ciroma)

* This key to pronunciation is the simpler of the two used in the *Universal Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. Henry Cecil Wyld (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1952), and the pronunciation itself is that normally used when English is the background language. It is simplified to the point where, obviously, it will not commend itself either to Arabists or to phoneticians, but this is the price of simplicity. All syllables are equally stressed when speaking correct Hausa, but when Hausa personal and place names and expressions are used in the course of English conversation, this is not necessarily the case. No attempt has been made to indicate either tone or unusual sounds such as the "dotted *k* or *b* or *d*." As an example of the difference between correct Hausa and the semi-Anglicized form, in the former "Kano" has a short *a*, while in the latter it is "Kahno."

I. PERSONAL AND PLACE NAMES

Abdullahi (abdooláhi)	Imam (imahm)
Abubakar (abōōbakar)	Isa (ēsa)
Abuja (abōōja)	Ja'afaru (ja'ahfarōō)
Ahmadu (ahmadōō)	Lokoja (lokōja)
Aliyu (aliyōō)	Maiduguri (maidōōguri)
Aminu (amēnōō)	Maliki (mahliki)
Argungu (argoongōō)	Muhammedu (moohammedōō)
Atiku (atēkōō)	Musa (mōōsa)
Audu (audōō)	Sama'ila (sama'ēla)
Bida (bēda)	Sokoto (sokatōō)
Baro (bahro)	Sulemanu (soolimáhnōō)
Birnin Kebbi (birnin kebbi)	Tafawa Balewa (tafahwa balāwa)
Birom (birom)	Umaru (ōōmarōō)
Bornu (bornōō)	Usumanu (ōōsoomáhnōō)
Enugu (enōōgōō)	Yahaya (yahahya)
Gobir (gōōbir)	Yakubu (yákoobōō)
Gusau (goosau)	Yola (yōla)
Gwandu (gwendōō)	Yoruba (yōruba)
Ibadan (ibadan)	Zaria (zahria)
Ibrahim (ibrahim)	Zungeru (zungerōō)
Igala (igahla)	Zuru (zōōrōō)
Ilorin (ilōrin)	

II. TRIBAL NAMES, TITLES, AND WORDS IN COMMON USE

- Alhaji** One who has performed the Holy Pilgrimage.
- Alkali** (alkahli) Native court judge administering Muslim law.
- Attajari** (pl. Attajarai) A merchant.
- Birni** A walled town. The town wall.
- Chiroma** (chirōma) Princely title.
- Dan** Literally "the son of," the *-n* being genitival. Also used as a diminutive. **Dan gari**, a little town.
- Dan Doka** (dan dōka), (pl. **Yan Doka**) Literally, "a son of order" (Doka is an order). Native authority police, members of a well-trained and disciplined organized body that succeeded the old emir's **Dogarai** or household police.
- Dogari** (dōgari), (pl. **Dogarai**) Old-time uniformed retainers of emirs, whose functions were escort duties, guard duties, and police duties in general. They were, substantially, the personal bodyguards of their chiefs and were replaced, as far as police duties were con-

- cerned, by the more highly trained and disciplined **Yan Doka** (see above).
- Etsu** Nupe word for chief. **Etsu Nupe** is the Chief of Nupe. Equally, **Etsu Doka** means the chief of police.
- Fadama** (fadama) The floodplain of a river. Well-watered, perennially fertile ground. Marshland.
- Fong** The title of the chiefs of the small, warlike tribes that invaded the Bamenda Plateau in the Cameroons in the last century. They originated in what became Northern Nigeria.
- Fulani** (foolahni), (sing. **Ba-Fillache** [bah-filahche]) The Fulani were a semipastoral people whose ancestors overcame the native rulers of Hausaland in the early years of last century. They are to be found almost everywhere in the Northern Region, wherever it is possible to keep cattle, either as pastoralists or in settled communities as rulers, civil servants, or ordinary citizens.
- Gida** (gida) House. **Maigida**, master of the house. **Uwargida**, mistress of the house or headwife of a polygamous establishment.
- Harmattan** (harmattán) Dry, dust-laden wind that blows into Northern Nigeria from the Sahara from November until February, or even later. The dust is so fine that fog conditions are created when it blows strongly. Can be very cold at night.
- Hausa** (pl. **Hausawa** [hausahwa]) The land or the language or the people of the Hausa-speaking tribes of Northern Nigeria. **Ba-Haushe**, a Hausa.
- Hurumi** (hooroomi) The communal grazing ground that lies immediately outside the walls of the walled towns of Hausaland. Beyond the **hurumi** is the farmland.
- Ibo** (ēboh) The Ibo are one of the principal ethnic groups of Nigeria. Their homeland lies in the southeast parts of the country where they total rather more than two thirds of the inhabitants of what was the Eastern Region.
- Jahilchi** Ignorance. **Yaki** (yaiki) **da Jahilchi**, the "War against Ignorance," the name given to the Northern regional government's Adult Education Campaign.
- Karife** Iron. Also means strength.
- Lamido** (lamēdo). Fulani word meaning chief. The title of the Emir of Adamawa, where Fulani, as opposed to the usual Hausa (Bornu excepted), is the lingua franca of the emirate.
- Mahaukata** (sing. **mahaukachi**) Madmen. The name adopted by an extreme right-wing organization centered in Kano.
- Mahdi** The Guided One. A widely held belief in Islam is that a divinely appointed Messiah will one day appear on earth, battle with evil in the shape of **Al Dajjal**, the equivalent of Antichrist, and bring about the final victory of Islam. Over the centuries many

self-declared Mahdis have appeared, and disappeared, at times leaving much havoc in their wake. Orthodox Islam in West Africa would have none of them or their dangerous doctrines, and usually they were suppressed before they acquired much of a following.

Makama (makahma) An important title high in the hierarchy in several emirates, for example, Bida, Kano, and Sokoto.

Malam (pl. *Malamai*) In the Muslim North anyone reasonably literate in Arabic script and with an adequate grounding in the Koran and in the precepts of Islam was entitled to call himself Malam. In more secular parlance the office malams in a native administration were the scribes, or clerical staff.

Mukaddam A deputy. Used of the local representatives (*Mukaddimin*) of the Tijanniya tarika.

NA (Hausa *en'a*) These two letters normally stand for "native administration," though, on occasion, where there is a legal implication—i.e., "NA rules" or "NA ordinance"—"native authority" is implied from the context.

The native administrations of Northern Nigeria during the period covered by this book were units of local government partially, or all but completely, self-contained as regards staff and institutions, in accordance with their size and resources. The largest, for instance, operated their own water and electricity undertakings, printing presses, etc. A native administration could consist of a single Muslim emirate or pagan chieftdom, or of a group of petty chieftdoms or tribal communities. Each native administration was under the direct control of a native authority. The native authority could consist either of a chief, advised by a council, or of a council representative of the component units that together formed the native administration. The native authority was responsible to the regional government (or to the central government in the days before regions were created). For up-to-date reading on this subject, see *Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Documents 1900-1947*, edited and introduced by A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

Nupe (*nūpe*) (Hausa *Nufawa* [sing. *Ba-Nufe*]) The land and language of the Nupe people.

Sabon Gari (*sahbon gari*) Literally, "new town." The Sabon Gari were the strangers' settlements that had come into being on the outskirts of large Northern cities such as Kano and Zaria. They were mainly populated by non-Muslims from the southern parts of Nigeria.

Salla Prayer (*salla assuba* is the dawn prayer), though by derivation it has also come to mean "festival." The *salla babba* is the great festival that celebrates the commencement of the new Muslim year,

and the *salla azumi* comes at the end of Ramadan, the fast month (*azumi* means fast).

Sardauna A princely title, implying leadership in war.

Sarki Chief in Hausa. Can be used either of the chief of a country, *Sarkin Kano* (the *n* being genitival), or of, say, a market master, *sarkin kasuwa*, or rest house keeper, *sarkin barriki* (*barriki* being a corruption of barracks, a relic of the military occupation of the early years of the century).

Shehu (*shāhu*) A religious leader often possessing temporal authority.

Shettima (*shetēma*) A Bornu title.

Talaka (pl. *Talakawa*) A man of humble origins, a poor man. The *Talakawa* (*talakahwa*) are the masses, in the political sense.

Tarika (*tarēka*) Literally, a "path" or a "way." The *tarikas* of Islam were brotherhoods bound together by a common ritual. The *Kadiriyya* and *Tijaniyya* were the best known in Northern Nigeria.

Turaki (*tooraiki*) A high-ranking title.

Turawa (*tōōrahwa*) (sing. *Ba-Ture* [*bah-tōōre*]) Word used to denote all white-skinned people.

Wali (*wahli*) A legal title. The *Walin Kano* would be the chief legal adviser on the emir's council. Where the holder of the title was extremely well known through, for instance, holding Ministerial office, like the *Wali* of Bornu, he would be known quite simply as *Wali*. Cf. *Sardauna* and *Makama*.

Wando Trousers.

Waziri (*wazēri*) Title given to the leading member of certain emirs' councils. The *Waziri* was the most important man in the emirate after the emir and usually had legal qualifications. He would *not* be a member of the ruling house.

Yaki (*yaiki*) War. *Sarkin Yaki* is a war leader.

Yoruba (*yōruba*) The Yoruba inhabit the southwestern parts of Nigeria. They, together with the Ibo and the Hausa-, Fulani-, and Kanuri-speaking peoples of the North make up the three main ethnic groups of Nigeria.

Appendix 5

NOTES ON PERSONALITIES*

These notes cover briefly the early careers and subsequent fortunes of a number of personalities who feature in the book.

Abubakar, Alhaji, Sir, G.B.E., C.M.G. Seventeenth Sultan of Sokoto. Succeeded 1938. Minister without Portfolio, Northern Region government until its supersession by federal military government in 1966.

Abubakar Imam, Alhaji, C.B.E. Chairman Northern Region Public Services Commission 1961-1966. Educated at Katsina College. Editor *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo* 1945. Entered politics 1951. Member Northern Region House of Assembly.

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Alhaji, Sir, K.B.E., P.C. Prime Minister

* Official designations: The designation of the principal official next to the Governor in the old-time colonial hierarchy was, successively in terms of constitutional advance, Colonial Secretary and Chief Secretary. In a subordinate administration such as a group of provinces or a region, it was Secretary and Civil Secretary. In Nigeria the head of that administration was, successively, Lieutenant Governor—Provinces (1914-1933), Chief Commissioner—Provinces (1933-1947), Chief Commissioner—Region (1947-1951), Lieutenant Governor—Region (1951-1954), Governor—Region (1954-1966). Over the final stage until 1963, when Nigeria became a republic, the Governor of the territory became a Governor General.

Permanent Under Secretary: The principal official in a British Ministry is the Permanent Under Secretary of State. "Permsec": The principal official in a Nigerian Ministry is the Permanent Secretary.

Some explanation, if only a very general one, of the multiplicity of letters that are apt to be encountered in any list of high-ranking British officials, such as this one, will probably be helpful to American readers. Letters denoting awards for military service in the face of the enemy, such as D.S.O. (Distinguished Service Order) or M.C. (Military Cross) speak for themselves. Civil awards are another matter. In brief, public service of a special nature in the former colonial territories, on the part either of officials or private persons, could be recognized by the Sovereign, on advice, by appointment to one of the Orders of Chivalry. These were, usually, either the Order of the British Empire or the Order of St. Michael and St. George. In the case of the latter Order there are three classes, Companion (C.M.G.), Knight Companion (K.C.M.G.), and Knight Grand Cross (G.C.M.G.). In the case of the former Order there is an additional class, that of Member (M.B.E.). Instances of direct personal service to the Sovereign on the occasion, for instance, of a Royal Visit to the territory could be rewarded, on the Sovereign's personal authority, by appointment to one of the four classes of the Royal Victorian Order (M.V.O., C.V.O., etc.).

- Federation of Nigeria until murdered in military coup of January, 1966. Born 1912. Educated at Katsina College. Became Teacher. Headmaster Bauchi School. Member of emir's council. Education Officer. Member Northern Region House of Assembly 1947. Minister of Works and later Minister of Transport Nigerian central government 1952-1957. Studied at Institute of Education, London University 1945.
- Ahmadu Bello**, Alhaji, Sir, K.B.E. Sardauna of Sokoto and cousin of present Sultan. Premier Northern Region 1954 until murdered in military coup of 1966. Born 1909. Educated at Katsina College. Schoolteacher 1931. District Head 1934. Member of Sultan's council 1938. Member Northern Region House of Assembly 1949. Minister of Works 1952. Minister of Local Government 1953.
- Akintola**, Samuel Ladoke, Chief. Premier Western Region 1960 until murdered in military coup of January, 1966. Born 1910. Teacher, journalist, politician, lawyer. Minister of Labor Nigerian central government 1952 and prominent member Action Group. Minister of Health 1953. Minister of Communications and Aviation 1957.
- Aliyu Makaman Bida**, Alhaji, C.B.E. Minister of Finance Northern Region 1957 until removed in military coup of 1966. Educated at Katsina College. Teacher. Headmaster Bida School. Member emir's council 1937. Northern Region House of Assembly 1947. Minister of Education 1952-1957.
- Aminu Kano**, Alhaji. Leader of radical opposition party (NEPU) in Northern Region 1950 on. Educated at Katsina College. Schoolteacher. Became Whip in Sir Abubakar's coalition government 1959. Commissioner for Communications, Federal Executive Council 1967.
- Arikpo**, Okoi, Doctor. Lecturer and anthropologist. Member of Ekoi Tribe. Minister of Lands and Surveys (NCNC) in central government 1952-1953. Expelled from party after differences with leadership 1953 and returned to academic life. Commissioner for External Affairs, Federal Executive Council 1967.
- Awolowo**, Obafemi, Chief. Leading Minister and later Premier in Western Region government. Born 1909. After early career as journalist and teacher entered politics. Called to bar 1946. Founded Action Group 1951. Leader of opposition in Federal House 1959. Sentenced for connection with "Action Group Plot" of 1962. Released 1966. Commissioner for Finance, Federal Executive Council 1967.
- Azikiwe**, Ndamndi, Doctor, P.C., LL.D., Litt.D. Premier Eastern Region 1954-1959. Born 1904. Studied in United States, Lincoln University, etc. Journalist and politician. Founded political party National Council for Nigeria and Cameroons 1944. Entered Western Region House of Assembly 1952. President Nigerian Senate 1960

- and same year Governor General of Federation. On Nigeria's becoming a republic, became President until post abolished by military government 1966.
- Bell**, Sir Gawain Westray, K.C.M.G., C.B.E. Governor Northern Region 1957-1962. Born 1909. Sudan Political Service 1931. Military service in Middle East in World War II. Lieutenant Colonel Arab Legion, Sudan 1953-1955. H.M. Political Agent Kuwait 1955-1957.
- Bourdillon**, Sir Bernard Henry, G.C.M.G., K.B.E. Governor Nigeria 1935-1943. Born 1883. Indian Civil Service 1908. Persian Gulf, Baghdad, Iraq 1918-1929. Ceylon 1929-1932. Governor Uganda 1932-1935. Died 1948.
- Browne**, Hablot Robert Edgar, C.M.G., O.B.E. Civil Secretary Northern Region 1952-1955. Acting Governor 1954. Born 1905. Appointed Nigeria 1928. West Indies 1939-1949. Nigeria 1950. Persian Gulf 1956-1957. Commonwealth Relations Office 1959-1967.
- Cameron**, Sir Donald Charles, G.C.M.G., K.B.E. Governor Nigeria 1931-1935. Born 1872. Colonial Service Guiana. Various Secretariat posts 1890-1903. Mauritius 1904-1907. Nigeria 1908. Chief Secretary 1921-1924. Governor Tanganyika 1924-1931. Died 1948.
- Carrow**, John Hinton, C.M.G., D.S.C., Commander R.N. (ret.). Born 1890. Various Resident Kano and Sokoto and Acting Chief Commissioner Northern Provinces. Royal Navy 1905-1919. Appointed Colonial Service Nigeria 1919. Retired 1947.
- Cohen**, Sir Andrew Benjamin, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., O.B.E. Head of African Division of Colonial Office during late forties. Born 1909. Colonial Office 1933. Governor Uganda 1952-1957. United Nations 1957-1961. Director General Department of Technical Co-operation 1961. Permanent Secretary Ministry of Overseas Development 1964.
- Dikko**, Doctor Russell Aliyu Barau. Senior Medical Officer Northern Region during fifties. Born 1912. Trained as doctor by Church Missionary Society. Government Medical Service 1941. Principal Medical Officer of Health Northern Ministry of Health 1960. Commissioner for Mines and Power, Federal Executive Council 1967.
- Enahoro**, Anthony, Chief. Leading Action Group politician. Member of Ishan Tribe. Minister of Home Affairs and Mid West Affairs Western Region government. Born 1923. Sentenced for part in "Action Group Plot" 1962. Released after army coup of 1966. Commissioner for Information and Labor, Federal Executive Council 1967.
- Foot**, Hugh Mackintosh (now Lord Caradon), G.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., O.B.E., P.C. Chief Secretary Nigeria 1947-1951. Born 1907. British administration Palestine 1929-1937. Later Transjordan, Cyrenaica. Colonial Secretary Cyprus 1943, Jamaica 1945. Governor Jamaica 1951-1957, Cyprus 1957-1960. United Nations 1961.
- Foster Sutton**, Sir Stafford William Powell, K.B.E., C.M.G. Chief Jus-

- tice Federation of Nigeria 1955-1958. Born 1897. Served in World War I. Called to bar 1926. Solicitor General Jamaica 1936. Attorney General Cyprus 1940, Kenya 1944, and Malaya 1948. Chief Justice Malaya 1950.
- Grey, Sir Ralph Francis Alnwick, G.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., O.B.E.** Chief Secretary Federation of Nigeria 1955-1957 and Deputy Governor General 1957-1959. Born 1910. Appointed Nigeria 1937. Development Secretary 1952. Secretary to Governor General and Council of Ministers 1954. Governor British Guiana 1959, Bahamas 1964.
- Hudson, Rowland Skeffington, C.M.G.** Head of African Studies Branch, Colonial Office 1949-1961. Appointed Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) 1919. Provincial Commissioner 1944. Secretary of Native Affairs 1945. Department of Technical Co-operation and Ministry of Overseas Development 1961-1967.
- Ibiam, Sir Francis Akanu, K.C.M.G., K.B.E.** Governor of Eastern Region 1960-1966. Had distinguished career as medical missionary until entered politics 1947-1952. Held several high offices in missionary world. A President of World Council of Churches. On overthrow of constitution in military coup of 1966 became Adviser to Military Governor of Eastern Region; later, on its secession, repudiated honors because of alleged British support to Nigerian government.
- Kashim Ibrahim, Alhaji, Sir, K.C.M.G., C.B.E.** Governor of Northern Region 1962-1966 and principal adviser to Military Governor after military coup of that year. Born 1910 in Bornu. Educated at Katsina College. Entered teaching profession. Took up politics 1947. Minister of Social Services central government 1952. Regional Minister of Social Development 1955. Left politics to become Waziri of Bornu. Chairman of Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology, etc.
- Macpherson, Sir John Stuart, G.C.M.G.** Governor of Nigeria 1948-1954. Governor General 1954-1955. Born 1898. Served in World War I. Malayan Civil Service 1921-1937. Colonial Office 1933-1935. Nigeria 1937-1939. Chief Secretary Palestine 1939-1943. Permanent Under Secretary for Colonies 1956-1959.
- Maddocks, Sir Kenneth Phipson, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.** Civil Secretary Northern Region 1955-1957. Twice Acting Governor. Deputy Governor 1957-1958. Born 1907. Appointed Nigeria 1929. Governor of Fiji 1958-1963.
- Marshall, Hedley Herbert, C.M.G., Q.C.** Legal Secretary then Attorney General Northern Region 1954-1962. Born 1909. Served in World War II. Appointed Colonial Legal Service 1946. Assistant Director British Institute of International and Comparative Law 1963.

- Marshall, Sir Hugo Frank, K.B.E., C.B.E.** Lieutenant Governor Western Region 1952-1954. Chief Secretary of Federation of Nigeria 1954-1955. Born 1905. Appointed Nigeria 1928. Administrative Secretary 1947-1952.
- Njoku, Eni, Professor.** Professor and University Lecturer. Minister of Mines and Power, Nigerian central government (NCNC) 1952-1953. Expelled from party after differences with leadership in 1953 and returned to academic life. Principal Lagos University 1962-1965.
- Okpara, Michael, Doctor.** Premier Eastern Region 1959-1966 when removed after military coup. Born 1919. Entered medical profession but turned to politics 1950. Eastern Region Minister of Health 1954.
- Palmer, Sir (Herbert) Richmond, K.C.M.G., C.B.E.** Lieutenant Governor Northern Provinces 1925-1930. Born 1877. Appointed Nigeria 1904. Governor of Gambia 1930-1933, Cyprus 1933-1939. Author of works on Bornu.
- Patterson, Sir John Robert, K.B.E., C.B.E.** Chief Commissioner Northern Provinces 1943-1948. Born 1892. Appointed Nigeria 1915. Secretary Northern Provinces 1935. Resident Bornu and Kano.
- Pleass, Sir Clement John, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., K.B.E.** Lieutenant Governor Eastern Region 1952-1954, Governor 1954-1956. Born 1901. Appointed Nigeria 1924. Development Secretary 1947.
- Price, Brigadier Thomas Reginald, D.S.O., M.C., and Bar.** Born 1894. Commanded 1st Battalion Nigeria Regiment 1931. Served in World Wars I and II. Royal Tank Corps and R.T. Regiment. Served with West African Frontier Force 1921-1932. Brigadier General Staff, Washington 1945-1948.
- Rankine, Sir John Dalzell, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.** Governor Western Region 1954-1960. Born 1907. Appointed Uganda 1931. Served Fiji, Barbados. Chief Secretary Kenya 1947-1951. British Resident Zanzibar 1952-1954.
- Richards, Sir Arthur Frederick (became Lord Milverton 1947), G.C.M.G.** Governor of Nigeria 1943-1947. Born 1885. Appointed Malayan Civil Service 1908. Governor North Borneo 1930-1933, Gambia 1933-1936, Fiji 1936-1938, Jamaica 1938-1943.
- Richards, Brigadier Hugh Upton, C.B.E., D.S.O.** Served in Nigeria Regiment from subaltern to Commandant 1927-1934 and 1940-1942. Served in World War I (France) and World War II. Commanded 3rd West African Brigade and Kohima garrison in successful defense against Japanese.
- Robertson, Sir James Wilson, K.T., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.B.E.** Governor General Federation of Nigeria 1955-1960. Born 1899. Served World War I. Appointed Sudan Political Service 1922. Acting Governor Gezira Province 1940. Civil Secretary Sudan government 1945-1953.

- Scott, Peter Heathcote Guillum, C.M.G.** Financial Secretary Northern Region 1952-1957. Born 1913. Appointed Nigeria 1936. Died 1961.
- Stapledon, Sir Robert de Stapledon, K.C.M.G., C.B.E.** Governor Eastern Region 1955-1960. Born 1909. Appointed Nigeria 1931. Financial Secretary Western Pacific High Commission 1946. Economic Secretary East African High Commission 1948. Chief Secretary Tanganyika 1954-1956.
- Tarka, Joseph Sarwuan.** Principal non-Muslim opposition leader in Northern Region and President United Middle Belt Congress 1955-1966. Born 1929. Member of Tiv tribe. Rural science teacher until entered politics. Involved in Tiv risings in 1960 and 1964. Commissioner for Transport, Federal Executive Council 1967.
- Thompson, Sir Eric Westbury, K.B.E., C.M.G., M.C.** Chief Commissioner Northern Region 1947-1951, Lieutenant Governor 1951-1952. Born 1897. Served in World War I. Appointed Nigeria 1919. At various times Resident Adamawa, Bornu, Kano.
- Walin Bornu, Alhaji, Muhammedu Ngeliruma.** Minister of Natural Resources Northern Region 1952-1953. Born 1908. Educated at Katsina College. Became teacher and later legal adviser to Bornu Native Administration. Entered politics 1947. Left politics to become Waziri of Bornu 1953 but was retired 1956. Pilgrims Officer Sudan 1958. Nigerian Ambassador to United Arab Republic. Died 1968.

I cannot bring this list to a close without making mention, in tribute to all, of at least a few of that generation of our fellows who joined us in the Colonial Service in Nigeria after the Second World War. Many served on after independence. Some indeed are still there. Of the former, Maurice Bennion remained to become Principal of the Institute of Administration, soon to be embodied in the North's first university, the Ahmadu Bello University. Indeed, after retirement to his native New Zealand, he was invited back to Africa to set up and direct a similar institution in Malawi. Tony Kirk-Greene also served in the Institute of Administration. Later, with several books to his credit, he spent the better part of six years in the United States, mostly as Visiting Professor in African Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. David Muffett, with one book behind him, also removed to the United States, where, at the time of writing, he holds a professorship in the Institute of African Affairs of Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. Of those still serving, John Smith is Director of the Staff Development Center, Kaduna, or was until a very recent appointment (provisional) as Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance in one of the new states (Benue-Plateau), while St. Elmo Nelson forges indestructibly on as Provincial Secretary (i.e., the leading civil servant) in Kano State.

Appendix 6

EDUCATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: THE BRITISH RECORD

Abridged from an unpublished article by A. A. Shillingford, C.B.E. Department of Education, Northern Nigeria 1926-1953, Director 1954-1957, Chief Advisor on Education, Federation of Nigeria 1957-1959.

At the beginning of this century, when Northern Nigeria came under British rule, education in colonial territories had been primarily a matter for missionary bodies sponsored by the churches. This applied particularly to countries in a primitive stage, since Christianity was the only recognized civilizing influence. Thus, Western education had been a "detribalizing" influence since it weakened the hold of traditional beliefs and customs among its recipients.

This, in the heyday of imperialism, was not reckoned to be good policy, and at the turn of the century people like Lugard were looking for something better. In Northern Nigeria the first Resident appointed to the Mohammedan capital of Sokoto opened, within a few weeks of the military occupation, a school in which to give the essentials of literacy to the young men who were to be trained to take some part, however humble, in the new administration. Education thus began as the handmaid of administration and was so regarded for at least forty years.

The first Director of Education, Hanns Vischer, had originally come to Nigeria as a missionary and graduated as one of Lugard's political staff on account of his local knowledge. He saw the task as essentially that of creating by the quickest means available a supply of competent assistants to the administration to take the place of imported clerks and tradesmen. The first step was, very naturally, the training of young men as teachers. None of these objectives, however, the creation of an elite whether of chiefs or teachers or tradesmen, was allowed to take place at the cost of upsetting traditional values of religion or social custom.

So education was never recognized as a "solvent" or regarded in any way as a cultural influence. It was, in fact, utilitarian in the narrowest sense of the word. And in the state of communications which

existed when I first came to Northern Nigeria in 1926 this was very narrow indeed. Hausa had a more utilitarian value than English, whether as a lingua franca, for example in Bauchi Province, or as a medium for public relations and public enlightenment, as in places like Kano and Zaria. In Bornu, on the other hand, where Kanuri was the vernacular, Hausa was barely understood except by malams who had been to Kano, for instance. It was therefore not used in the schools. The study of English, in fact, was in Northern Nigeria little more than an academic exercise, appreciated by students much as classical languages had been regarded in schools in Britain for centuries. At their request I used in the late twenties to give "further education" classes in English to Bornu Native Treasury clerks.

By now, however, this *ad hoc* attitude was beginning to look as if it might give way to something more progressive. The caliber of the first products of Katsina Training College (opened in 1921) was something new and outstanding in West African education and showed what could be done. Then, in 1929, for the first time, a Director of Education, Eric Hussey, was appointed for the whole territory North and South. By this time there was a provincial school and a crafts school in ten of the twelve provinces of the North.

In his initial education plan Hussey's proposals for the North differed very little from those for the South. There was to be a higher college at Zaria, "middle schools" were to be established all over the territory by the amalgamation of the provincial schools and craft schools, and for the first time two elementary training centers for teachers in Muslim primary schools were to be opened. A center for non-Muslims had already been established at Toro in Bauchi Emirate under the aegis of the native administration. Insofar as the missions came into Hussey's scheme they would, it was hoped, follow the example of quality set by government institutions and thus, presumably, qualify for grants.

The amalgamation of the craft schools with the purely literary provincial schools was based on a comprehensive educational principle with which few would disagree. Illiterate tradesmen were not wanted, and the dichotomy which existed between manual and literary education was undesirable. So all boys were to have the same basic initial education, with a bifurcation of courses at the end of the second year.

Hussey's "New Deal," on which such high hopes were placed, ran for about two years after its inauguration in April, 1930. At the end of 1931, however, Nigeria was in the throes of a world economic crisis, and "retrenchment," its remedy in those days, meant that vital educational development was arrested. In the next two years large numbers of British staff were "axed." This meant that there was no one available for expansion in the provinces, each one of which, be-

fore retrenchment, had a staff of four British Education Officers. Worse, one of the elementary training centers was soon closed for lack of staff, and the proposed higher college at Zaria never even materialized.

In 1936, Katsina College, where teachers of English and other subjects taught in middle schools had been trained, was moved to Kaduna and became a secondary school. There was therefore no staff for the regular replacement of teachers of this caliber until the college was reopened as a training college thirteen years later.

Meanwhile, the war, of course, had terminated the first efforts to restore the damage done by the slump, and no losses of British staff could be made good between 1939 and 1947, by which time half the provinces were without Education Officers. The institution chiefly affected was the middle school, whose normal losses of trained staff were with difficulty made good, since few if any teachers were being trained in Kaduna College. Thus the standard of these schools, for which such high hopes had been entertained in the early thirties, had sunk very low. At the same time the demands upon them for staff by the native administrations had increased, and the one elementary training center with difficulty found recruits from them. Similarly, boys on leaving were reluctant to continue their schooling at Kaduna College since they could at once find paid employment with their own native administrations.

Thus the "run down" produced by the slump and the war had had grave results for the North in all fields of education, with the exception, perhaps, of girls' education, where the training center opened at Sokoto in 1939 had managed to keep a full staff of British women teachers all through the war. But this center was unable, with the kind of students it got from elementary schools, to train teachers of English. Indeed, at the end of the war neither girls nor boys could be trained as teachers of English, and in the North a new type of teaching qualification was recognized, the Vernacular Certificate. Teachers so trained went straight from their elementary schools to a four-year course of training in the vernacular, at the end of which they had little or no English and no qualification to teach it. At the same time the teaching in middle schools had deteriorated, with doleful effects on the standard of English. This again was felt in the one secondary school, and when British staff began to be recruited at the end of the forties, they found the conditions discouragingly difficult. It was, therefore, another eight or ten years after the end of the war, until in fact the training college at Katsina for the issue of a Higher Elementary Certificate had been in production for some years, before conditions essential to all the urgent development required could be created.

By 1945, the expatriate staff of the Department of Education in the North had sunk to a total of between twenty and thirty. By the mid fifties it had risen to more than three hundred. By this time there were two government secondary schools and three trade centers. A government training college for teachers existed in every province, with an annual output each of twenty trained teachers. The provincial middle schools were at last, as Hussey had intended, regarded as secondary schools. There were also seven or eight secondary schools and teacher training colleges owned and administered by Christian missionary bodies of varying denominations.

All this had been made possible by the Education Ordinance of 1948, which applied to the whole territory and provided for a scale of assistance to non-government schools and colleges on a scale never previously imagined. This was the outcome of an inquiry into government grants-in-aid to schools from the now vastly increased revenues initiated by Alistair Davidson, Director of Education for Nigeria from 1944 to 1953, and carried out by Sir Sidney Phillipson.

The new direction of educational finance was one of the postwar conditions which revolutionized our thinking on education. For the North it gave a pattern for public assistance in the non-government field, which meant, very largely, the native authorities. I recall a private meeting between the regions in 1947 where the legal definition of "education authority" was being considered in the draft of the new ordinance. I gave my view that, in the North, native authorities were by their nature education authorities, for this concept was the essence of our educational policy. It was the link between the twenties and the fifties. Stretched to its most tenuous form by the slump and by the war, the system had nevertheless survived, thanks to our faith in it and the support it got from some of the more enlightened chiefs.

Almost equally important was the fact that developments in air travel, accelerated by the war, made it possible for the Secretary of State's educational advisers, who included many prominent figures in the world of education in Britain, to maintain an ever increasing interest in education overseas. I was, between 1947 and 1958, in a position to evaluate this assistance and the entirely new influence it brought to bear on those concerned with colonial policy in Britain.

The Secretary of State in earlier times had employed an Advisory Committee on Education. While this committee produced at intervals sound and useful directions in the form of White Papers, it was not possible for it to be in direct touch with overseas governments, still less to give advice other than the most general. Nor could its conclusions be speedily reached. Air travel changed all this and made possible a new interest and guidance which was an incalculable factor for good in these matters. For the first time it became possible for

the representatives of the highest academic opinion in Britain to meet those concerned with education in Nigeria against the essential background of the people and the country itself. With each development of higher education in Nigeria it became the practice for decisions to be taken in Nigeria with the aid of the overseas members of the various boards and councils.

Air travel had also made possible in 1946 to lay the foundations of a scholarship scheme whereby selected Northern teachers, among them the late Prime Minister of the Federation, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, were accepted for training by London University. The scheme was so successful that it was extended in other directions. In addition the British Council played a most important part in sponsoring educational tours of Britain for Northern Native Administration officials and others.

The pace of educational advance was of course quickened in 1952 by the new constitutional arrangements which set up Ministries of Education in each region. In the North the new Ministers wisely refrained from emulating the policies aimed at free universal primary education in the East and West. Instead the Northern government set itself realistic targets where quality—which had been the hallmark of educational policy in the North—was not sacrificed to quantity.

The constitutional developments which occupied the fifteen years after the war would have misfired if at the same time they had not brought about a complete change in the hitherto apathetic attitude of the people of the Northern Region to Western education. This process was accelerated by the fact that an African Minister of Education could exert an influence on public opinion which had been beyond the power of successive expatriate Directors of Education.

Thus it was that when it acquired self-government the Northern Region had a rapidly expanding system of primary schools with a seven-year curriculum and in numbers only limited by the rate at which teachers could be trained. It had a secondary system which, in the opinion of one educationist of long experience in West Africa, bade fair to become in a few years a model to other territories. It had restored the old provincial craft schools in a form and numbers never contemplated by their originator and had, besides, three large centers for the production of fully trained technicians. It was on the verge of amalgamating the various subprofessional training centers of the former Departments of, for instance, Agriculture and Animal Health and making of them the nucleus of a regional university. It had, in brief, an educational system capable of maintaining its own quality in conditions of independence.

INDEX

- Abakpas, 25
 Abba Gana, 252
 Abba Habib, 291
 Abdullahi, Malam (brother of Usuman dan Fodio), 43, 99
 Abdul Maliki, 315
 Abeokuta, 402
 Abubakar Imam (first Nigerian editor of *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*), 154-156, 195, 218, 235, 292, 360, 431
 Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Sir, 218, 227, 288, 301, 307, 353, 360, 363, 374, 379, 381, 383-386, 389, 391-392, 396-397, 400, 407-408, 441; on admission of non-Muslims as Ministers, 238; appointment as central Minister, 228; broadcast from London, 156; call for reform of native administrations, 208-210; corruption among colleagues, 396; disillusionment with Lagos, 348-349; efforts to preserve national unity, 394; faced with severe disorders in Western Region and plot to overthrow government, 392-393; first major speech, 166-167; forms national government, 392; interview with *West Africa*, 398; murdered, vii, 399; prevails in clash with Azikiwe on constitutional issues, 396; provincial devolution, 348; reconciles author with Sardauna, 312-313; relations with Sir James Robertson, 365; reluctance to accept Prime Ministership, 363-364
 Abuja, 152-153, 161
 Abuja, Emir Sulemanu Barau, 152, 156, 160-161, 167
 Aburi, 404
 Achimugu, Peter, 238-239, 341
 Action Group, 262, 272, 357, 363, 392-394, 396, 398; campaign to transfer Ilorin and Yoruba parts of Kabba to Western Region, 283-284, 344-346; clash with Northern members, House of Representatives, 263-264; conspiracy to overthrow government, 392; derides Northern leaders, 276; fails to gain Northern support, 392, 395; financial record, commission of inquiry into, 392; demands self-government in 1956, 263; inauguration, 217; leaders placed under restriction, 392; opposition to Macpherson Constitution, 260-261; plans for Kano political meeting provoke strong Northern resentment, 267-269; refusal to accept rigged election verdict, 396; splits in two, 392; suspension of Action Group government in West, 392
 Adamawa, 217, 228, 238, 243-245, 343, 359, 365
 Adamawa, Lamido Ahmadu, 245, 288, 326
 Adamawa, Lamido Aliyu, 381
 Adamawa, Modibbo Adama, 243-245
 Adamawa, Waziri of, 244
 Adeane, Sir Michael, 317, 321
 Ade Ojo, 165
 Administrative Officers, British, vii, xiv, 167, 237, 292-295, 330, 334, 348, 391; Abubakar on the D.O.'s task—"too much paper," 209; battles for distant and under-privileged communities, 198-199; changing position in provinces vis-à-vis the regional government—"new model" D.O.'s, 353-355; "crime" of overspending the vote, 95; deterioration in relations with NA officials as self-government draws near, 351; direct rule by D.O.'s and Residents in Cameroons contrasted with indirect rule in North, 53-54; D.O.'s and the new politicians, 351-352; D.O.'s

- duties in Cameroons, 13-14, 19-20; enforced preoccupation with routine, 211; first proposal to train Africans as D.O.'s, 148-149; first foundations of local administrations in Cameroons, 20-21, 35-36; importance of gaining confidence of NA, 70-71; improvisation on meager revenue, 21, 87-88, 126; language qualifications, 22; liking for non-Muslim Tiv, 342; Lugard System, 45-47; magisterial duties, 14, 19-20, 34-35, 109; need to reduce friction and shed burdens as self-government approaches, 236, 351; need to vary approach as between Fulani and Hausa NA's, 86-87; new policy toward pagan communities in Muslim emirates, 101-102; penal postings, so-called, to non-Muslim areas, 340-341; as Permanent Secretaries, 294; policy regarding postings to secretariat duties in North, 352; preliminary course, xvii; quality of postwar entry, 211; redeployment of top personnel, 383; removal of responsibility for native courts, customary and Muslim, 370; Residents and local government reform, 211; Residents as electoral officers, 223; Resident's duties and isolation, 176-177; responsibilities toward railway construction labor, 58-59; responsibility for intelligence information, 309; role in Hudson Plan, 350; selection of, xvii; takeover in Tiv, 391; ultimate responsibility for keeping wheels of government running, 107-108
- Administrative Officers, Northern Nigerian, 287
- Adult education campaign (War against Ignorance), 234-236, 324
- Agé, 27-29
- Agriculture, 103, 126, 146, 152-153, 182-184, 234
- Ahmadu Bello. *See* Sardauna of Sokoto, Ahmadu
- Ahmadu Bello University, 390
- Ahmadu Coomassie, 324
- Ahmed el Tijani. *See* Tijani, Ahmed el
- Air communications, 108-109, 128, 169, 301, 320, 325, 335-337, 379, 440. *See also* Kano Flying Club, projected; Kano; Northern Region Communications Flight
- Aitken, W. T. (later Sir William), 298
- Ajami (Arabic script), 40
- Ajaokuta, 338-339
- Akak, 12
- Akintola, Chief S. L., 363, 392-396, 398, 400, 405
- Alanamu, Sa'adu, 567
- Aldenham School, xv, 216
- Alexander, C. W. (Lieutenant Governor, Northern Provinces), 107
- Alexandra, Princess, 390
- Alhassan dan Tata (Hausa merchant, Kano), 206
- Ali Akilu, 400
- Aliyu Bida. *See* Makaman Bida
- Aliyu, Turakin Zaria. *See* Turakin Zaria Aliyu
- Alkali (native court judge, pl. alkalai), 46, 74, 85, 114, 256, 283, 287, 315, 334
- All Nigeria Conference, 1966. *See* Conference, All Nigeria, 1966
- Alwali (last Hausa ruler of Kano), 205
- Aminu Kano, 218-219, 225, 432
- Anglo-French Convention of 1898, 247
- Arab (Government Messenger), 133
- Arabic language and script, 40, 46, 166, 206, 300
- Arega, 136
- Argungu, 69, 83, 86-87, 89, 93, 112-113, 117, 132, 180, 182-183, 329-330; characteristics of Kebbi people, including strange power over crocodiles, 84; folk dancing at Bwi, 77-78; maladministration, 74; opening up by new roads, 75-80; purge of palace gang, 75; town, station, and people, 70; witchcraft and black magic, 71-72
- Argungu, Emir Muhammedu I, 70, 72, 74-79

- Argungu, Emir Muhammedu II, 83
 Argungu, Emir Sama'ila, 178, 180, 288
 Arikpo, Dr. Okoi, 260, 432
 Armed forces (general), 365, 396. *See also* Nigerian Navy; Nigeria Regiment
 Army. *See* Nigeria Regiment; West Africa Frontier Force
 Attahiru, Muhammedu. *See* Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto
 Awolowo, Chief Obafemi ("Awo"), 260-261, 368, 399, 432; clashes with Northern politicians on early self-government issue, 263-264; invested with title of chief, 242; leads opposition in Federal House, 392; originates Action Group, 217; rallies Yoruba to face Ibo challenge, 158-159, 194-195; released from prison, 402; tried and imprisoned for connection with plot to overthrow government, 393
 Azikiwe, Dr. Nnamdi, 155, 157-158, 194, 204, 260, 368, 395, 432; accused of using public money to bolster African Continental Bank, 358-359; appointed President, 389; deflected from reaching Kaduna at time of Kano riots, 272; founds NCNC, 159; inspires Ibo pride and sense of destiny, 157; intervenes in 1964 federal election issue, 395-396; delivers rousing speech to fellow Ibos, 194; succeeds Sir James Robertson as Governor General of Federation of Nigeria, 389; worsted in battle with Abubakar on constitutional issue, 395-396
 Baba Gana, 252
 Backhouse, M. V., 112, 272
 Backwell, H. F., 68-69, 71
 Bakweri, 8
 Bali, 23-24
 Bamenda, 7, 14, 18, 20, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31-33, 36, 49
 Banditry, 66, 90-91, 249, 256
 Baro, 128, 275, 336
 Bauchi, 166, 252, 301, 332, 349, 365, 438
 Bauchi, Emir Yakubu, 166, 288-289
 Bauchi, Waziri, 288
 Bell, C., 153, 380
 Bell, Mrs. C. (Jean), 380
 Bell, Sir Gawain, 389, 433
 Bello Kano, 227, 238, 291-292
 Bello, Muhammedu. *See* Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto
 Benin, 399
 Bennion, M. J., 253, 307, 436
 Benue Province, 335, 341, 343
 Benue River, xiv, 129, 140, 217, 237-238, 242-243, 289, 332, 336, 391; trade and transport on 243, 301, 337, 379
 Berber nomads, 246
 Biafra, 65, 404
 Bida, xiv, 88-89, 116-118, 120, 126, 128, 153, 161-162
 Bida, Emir (Etsu Nupe Muhammedu Ndayako), 117-118, 120, 149, 152-153
 Bin Yauri, 173
 Birnin Kebbi ("B. K."), 69-70, 86-87, 97, 113, 139, 143, 145, 174, 182, 188, 211, 302, 338; town planning in, 87-89
 Birom, Chief of (Rwang Pam), 333-334, 343
 Birom people, 242, 333-334, 343, 348, 399
 Biu, 233
 Black, J. N., 380
 Bornu, 41, 43, 119, 129, 133, 135-136, 226, 228, 233-234, 243, 245-257, 258, 263, 288, 291, 300, 315, 328, 336, 375, 390, 438
 Bornu, Mai Dunama, 246

- Bornu, Shehu Garbai, 247-248
 Bornu, Shehu Kiari, 248
 Bornu, Shehu Muhammed el Amin el Kanemi (Shehu Laminu), 246
 Bornu, Shehu Muhammed el Kanemi (later Sir Umar), 227, 248-257, 319
 Bornu, Shehu Omar, 246
 Bornu, Waziri Ibrahim, 249-250, 253-256
 Bornu, Wali Muhammed (succeeded Waziri Ibrahim), 227, 250, 253, 255-256, 291
 Bourdillon, Sir Bernard, 107-108, 148-149, 154, 380
 Bourdillon, Bernard G. (son of Sir Bernard), 108
 Bourdillon, P. I. (son of Sir Bernard), 380
 B.B.C., 137, 156, 278
 British Council, 441
 Brown, T. A. (later Sir Algernon), 314-315
 Browne, Brigadier D., 317
 Browne, H. R. E., 291
 Budget. *See* Finance
 Buea, 6, 7, 16-18
 Budden, Dr. F. H., 187-188
 Butler, C. N., 130-131
 Bwi, 76-78

 Cadman, H., 20
 Calabar, 216
 Cambridge summer school, 1947, 169-172, 182
 Cameron, Sir Donald, 101, 107-108, 120, 171, 297, 433
 Cameroon, Mount, 6, 7
 Cameroons, Northern, 367-393
 Cameroons Province (also referred to as Southern Cameroons), 5-7, 9, 19, 22-24, 36, 47, 53, 102, 176, 275, 367
 Cannibalism, 16, 28
 Caradon, Lord. *See* Foot, Sir Hugh
 Carr, R. (Dickie), 90-91
 Carrow, Commander J. H., 110-111, 113-114, 433
 Census, 1962, and 1964, 393-394
 Cerebrospinal meningitis, 111, 126
 Chad, Lake, 26, 39, 132, 135-137, 246-247
 Chad Territory. *See* Territoire du Tchad
 Chafe, 58-59
 Chambers, P. C., 378
 Charles, Prince, 232
 Chief Commissioner, position of, 107, 208, 211, 221
 Chief Justice, federal, 285, 358
 Chief Justice, Northern, 285, 314, 319
 Chiefs, 119, 120, 148, 150, 167, 168, 231-232, 237, 242-243, 287-288, 290, 304, 319, 332, 349, 377, 381, 391; abolition of Sole Native Authorities, 240; anomalies between resources and responsibilities, 141-143; attack on Northern chiefs by Lagos hooligans, 264; attitude of political leaders toward, 241; Cameroons chiefs, 24, 35; clash with Ministers, 310-312; continuing influence, 304; criticism of attitude of administration toward, 150; enforced retirement of reactionary rulers, 287-290; First Class and Second Class Chiefs, 72; first reactions toward Ministers, 232, 241; plain speaking by author, 377; status of chiefs in Northern Nigeria, 54; status under independence, 366; wide responsibilities, 242-243
 Chiefs' conference, 119, 129

- Chiefs' councils, 74, 120, 180, 207, 209, 227, 240, 250, 254-255, 324, 330, 340-341, 345, 349, 381
 Chiefs, Traditional Selectors of, 69, 105, 113, 220, 279
 Chiroma. *See* Kano, Chiroma of
 Christianity, 165, 339, 437
 Christian missions, xiv, 6, 15, 29, 86, 102, 118-119, 124, 128, 152-153, 165, 195, 238, 244, 333, 335, 342, 408, 437, 440
 Christians, 165-166, 238, 313, 332-334, 341, 365, 372, 399, 402
 Citizen. *See* Nigerian Citizen
 Civil servants, British, relations with Nigerian Ministers and politicians, 237, 258-261, 292-295, 306-307, 319, 351-352, 356-358, 375-376, 380, 383-384, 393, 405
 Civil Servants' Charter, 236
 Civil servants, Northern Nigerian, 148, 235, 286, 362, 375-376, 380, 405; training of administrative officers, barristers, police officers, 287
 Civil Service, Northern, post-independence, 405-406, 408
 Clarke, A. T., 307
 Clements, murder of, 59-66, 68, 81, 329
 Cobban, D., 298
 Cohen, Sir Andrew, 169-170, 182-185, 433
 Coleman, Wing Commander E. H., 301
 Collison, V. E., 307
 Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 21, 151, 300
 Colonial Office, xvii, 109, 169-172, 182, 215-216, 281, 296, 308, 349, 372, 373, 378
 Colonial Service, 405
 Colonie du Niger, 134-135
 Commander of the Faithful, 43. *See also* Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto
 Communications. *See* Air communications; Kano Flying Club, projected; Northern Region Communications Flight; Railway; Benue River; Niger River; Roads; Telecommunications
 Communism, 277-278
 Conference, All Nigeria, 1966, 402
 Conference, Commonwealth (Lagos), 1966, 398
 Conference, Residents', 129
 Constitutional Conference, 1953-1954, 276-278, 281, 291, 293, 306, 356
 Constitutional Conference, 1957, 356, 358, 362-364, 366-368, 371, 374-375, 382
 Constitution No. 1, Richards, 154, 159, 215
 Constitution No. 2, Macpherson, 215-217, 221, 258-261, 265, 276
 Constitution No. 3, federal, Lyttelton, 276-278, 281, 285, 291, 293, 300, 306; suspension of, 400
 Cooke, W. H. (late headmaster of Aldenham), xv, xvi
 Coomassie. *See* Ahmadu Coomassie
 Cooper, Miss A. E., 188
 Cornish, F., 63
 Corruption, including fraud and embezzlement by public servants, vii, 44, 58, 68-69, 74, 118, 150, 207, 209, 233, 245, 249-250, 256-257, 259, 266, 346, 352-353, 396-397
 Council of Ministers, 221, 227, 231, 238-239, 244, 263, 360; disappearance of British officials from, 367
 Counsell, E. H. M., 391
 Court, High, 277-281, 286, 314, 369, 405
 Court, Supreme, 19, 190, 256
 Courts, customary. *See* Law, customary
 Courts, Muslim. *See* Law, Muslim
 Courts of Justice, British, 281-283, 315, 369, 405
 Crawford, Dr., 131

Crime. *See* Banditry

Cross River, 13-14

Daily Service, 158, 269

Daily Times (Lagos), 298

Dagash, Musa, 251, 254

Dahomey, 132, 138, 275

Dakkerri, 124, 126

Daldy, A. F., 153

Dan Fodio, Usman. *See* Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto

Dan Galadima, District Head, Kachia, 102, 104

Daniel, F. de F., 90, 95

Daura, 40, 43

Davidson, Basil, vi

Davidson, R. A. M., 186, 440

Davies, J. B., 212

"Dayspring" (steamer), 49

Dendi, 78-79

de Gaulle, General, 134, 138-139

"Defense Fund," Northern, 218

Democracy. *See* Parliamentary democracy

de Putron, P., 248

Development plans, boards and committees, 151-153, 154, 162, 175, 185, 201-202, 232.

See also Colonial Development and Welfare Act

Dikko, Dr. R. A. B., 195, 433

Dikwa, 247-248

Dikwa, Emir of, 288

Directors of government departments, attitude and position of, 186, 293-295, 378-379

District Officers. *See* Administrative Officers

Dogarai (traditional police), 46, 55-56, 60, 64, 66, 90, 281

Douglas-Home, Sir Alec, 408

Drum language, 30

Eastern Nigeria (also referred to as Eastern Provinces, Eastern Region), 154, 156-157, 159, 203-204, 216, 260, 283, 291, 296, 319, 323, 342, 356-357, 363, 367, 376, 382, 393-395, 401, 403-404; becomes self-governing, 367

Education in Northern Nigeria, xiv, 15, 86, 115, 118, 153, 162, 169, 189, 206-207, 216, 234, 251, 293, 305, 323-324, 335, 338, 364, 380, 390, 394, 401, 408, 437-441; disastrous retrenchment of education officers (1931), 86. *See also* Adult education campaign; Ahmadu Bello University; Kaduna Capital School; Katsina College

Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Yoruba cultural organization), 159, 195

Elections, federal, 368, 392, 394-395

Elections, Regional, Eastern, 359

Elections, Regional, Northern, 217, 221-225, 311; increase in number of direct elections, 359

Elections, Regional, Western, 359, 396

Elizabeth II, Queen, 92, 181, 232, 241, 315-326, 389

Ellison, R. E., 378

El Mansur, Sultan of Morocco, 78

Emberton, J. J., 62, 64

Enahore, Chief Antony, 242, 393, 402, 433

Enugu, 203-204, 216, 323, 360, 399

Etsu Nupe. *See* Bida, Emir of

Eustace, R. B. B., 341

- Evans, L. E. T., 212
 Executive Council, Eastern, 260
 Executive Council, Northern, 221, 228, 231-232, 235, 237, 239, 250, 258, 288, 291,
 298, 308, 309, 317, 319, 341, 385; disappearance of Civil Secretary and Financial
 Secretary from, 367, 375, 382
 Eyo Ita, Professor, 260
 Ezera, Dr. Kalu, vi, 357

 Fad'allah, son of Rabeh, 248
 Fagge, 267, 270-271, 273
 Fajuyi, Brigadier, 402
 Famine, threat of, 143-145
 Featherstone, E. K., 198
 Federal constitution. *See* Constitution, federal
 Federal House. *See* House of Representatives
 Fellowes, Sir Edward, 262
 Fernando Po, 6, 132
 Ferris, W. G. C., 338, 379
 Finance, Central and Federal, 110, 151, 164, 175, 404
 Finance, Eastern Regional, 164, 356, 358
 Finance, Northern Regional, 164, 232, 300, 317, 390
 Flying Club, Kano. *See* Kano Flying Club, projected
 Fongs, 24
 Foot, Sir Hugh (later Lord Caradon), 198, 204, 215, 433
 Forestry, 50, 183-184, 219, 226, 251-252
 Foster-Sutton, Sir Stafford, 285, 358, 433
 Franklin, Doctor S. O., 192
 Free French Movement. *See also* Vichy administration of French West Africa, 134-
 135, 138
 French in West and equatorial Africa, 57, 135, 247
 Fulani Empire (also referred to as Sokoto Empire), 39-44, 49, 88, 117, 123, 168,
 327-328, 344, 375
 Fulani language, 23, 36, 81, 83, 92, 244
 Fulani people (Fulbe), 23, 41-44, 55, 69-70, 74, 84, 86, 91-93, 98, 101, 103-104, 116-
 117, 123-124, 127-128, 155, 160, 168, 173, 180, 193, 205-206, 208, 217, 238, 244,
 246, 264, 280, 314, 328-329, 331, 343-344
 Furze, Major R. D. (later Sir Ralph), xvi-xvii

 Gardes de Cercle, 57, 139, 147
 Gaskiya Corporation, 298
 Gaskiya *Ta Fi Kwabo*, 155-161, 235, 292
 Geidam, 138
 George VI, King, 181, 231-232
 German administration in the Cameroons, 5-7, 9, 20, 22, 24, 26-27, 35, 247
 Ghana (formerly Gold Coast), 362, 378, 392, 404
 Giles, L. C., 133, 337
 Gobir, 42-43, 180
 Goldie, Sir George, xiv
 Government Lodge, Kaduna (from 1954 called Government House), 226, 231, 233,
 288, 296, 319, 320-321, 375, 398
 Government Messengers. *See* Messengers, Government
 Governor General, 185, 277, 300, 360, 366, 384, 389. *See also* Azikiwe, Dr.; Lugard,
 Sir Frederick; Macpherson, Sir John; Robertson, Sir James
 Governor of Nigeria, 64, 107, 119, 263-264; position of under Macpherson Constitu-

- tion, 221. *See also* Bourdillon, Sir Bernard; Cameron, Sir Donald; Richards, Sir Arthur
- Governor, Eastern Region, 277, 358. *See also* Pleass, Sir Clement; Stapledon, Sir Robert
- Governor, Northern Region, 277, 291-292, 307, 310, 312, 366-367, 374-377, 379, 382, 386, 398, 400. *See also* Bell, Sir Gawain; Kashim, Shettima
- Governor, Western Region, 277, 366, 382. *See also* Rankine, Sir John
- Gowers, Lady, 5
- Gowon, Lt. Colonel (later Major General), 402, 404
- Greatbatch, B., 185, 317, 382, 384, 386
- Greswell, R. E., 384
- Grey, Sir Ralph, 360, 434
- Gumel, 201, 214
- Gusau, 58-59, 62-66, 113, 145-148, 186, 188, 190, 196, 198, 390
- Gusau Club, 192
- Gwandu, 69-70, 79, 86, 98, 104, 117, 140, 173, 183, 244, 337, 391; administration in 1931, 86-90; drought and food shortage, 144-146; early history, 43, 69; mounted police force in, 90-92; opening up by new roads, 93-97
- Gwandu, Emir Usumanu, 81-83, 86-91, 93-94, 98-99, 140-141, 146
- Gwandu, Emir Yahaya (later Sir Yahaya), 98-99, 140-141, 143-144, 160, 167, 178, 180, 192
- Gwari, 127-128, 152
- Gwotomo, 183
- Hadejia, 201
- Hadow, B., 185
- Hall, Dr. R. N., 73
- Hallam, W. K. R., 256
- Hammerskjold, Dag, 286
- Hassan Abuja, 160
- Hassan Katsina, Major. *See* Katsina, Hassan
- Hassan Messenger (ex-Sergeant Major), 55-56, 60-61, 73-75, 80, 82, 85, 132
- Hastings, A. C. G., vi
- Hausaland (including Hausa states), 39-43, 49, 69, 100, 116, 128, 173, 198, 244, 246, 329, 338
- Hausa language, 5, 22-23, 36, 40, 81, 100, 102, 117, 125, 134, 155-156, 166-167, 206, 235, 244, 251, 277, 315, 319, 324, 332, 345, 376, 385, 438
- Hausa people, 25, 41-43, 86, 103, 116, 127, 140, 156, 160, 195, 205-206, 218, 271-272, 287, 328-330, 342, 344
- Hawkesworth, E. G. (later Sir Gerald), 25, 33-35
- Hawkins, Major General E. B. B., 136, 138-139
- Henderson, Miss M., 379
- Heussler, Professor Robert, xvii
- Hewby, W. P., 248
- Hibbert, F. D., 292
- Hibbs, V. D., 380
- High Commissioner, British, 44-45
- High Commissioner, Nigerian, 290
- High Court. *See* Court, High
- Hill, Brigadier T., 270
- Hinden, Miss R., 170
- Hindle, J. F., 202, 302
- Hodgkin, Thomas Lloyd, vi
- Hodgkinson, H. P. G., 271-273

- Holts & Co., John, 337
 Holmes, E. T., 103
 Home Defense Volunteers, 130-131
 Hospitals. *See* Medical and Health Services
 House of Assembly, Eastern Region, 154, 164, 260, 358-359
 House of Assembly, Northern Region, 154, 164-167, 173, 175, 191-192, 198, 203, 208, 221, 225, 227, 231-233, 275-276, 286, 296, 301, 303-304, 323, 333, 345, 350, 359, 367, 385
 House of Assembly, Western Region, 154, 164, 260, 359; disorders in, 392
 House of Chiefs, Northern Region, 154, 165, 167, 175, 221, 227, 231-232, 240, 242, 267-268, 315, 323, 333, 367, 377, 385
 House of Representatives (also called the Federal House), 221, 227, 231, 260-261, 275, 277, 304, 362-363, 368, 392, 393-394
 Hudson, R. S., 215, 349, 434
 Hudson Plan, 350-351, 354
 Humphreys, F., 133, 234, 249, 253, 256, 315
 Hunt, W. E. (later Sir William), 16
 Hunter, K. H., 378
 Huxley, Mrs. Elspeth, 170
 Hussey, E. R. J., 438, 440

 Ibadan, 215, 344, 360, 396, 399
 Ibiam, Dr. (later Sir Francis), 204, 434
 Ibo Federal Union, 158
 Ibo people, 157-160, 174, 194, 196, 215, 264-267, 269-274, 278, 280, 284, 304, 332, 342, 363, 365, 367, 401-404, 407
 Ibo State Assembly, 194
 Ibo State Union, 158
 Ibrahim Kaolack (Tijani Sheik), 328-330
 Idah, 238, 330, 338-340
 Igala, 238, 338-341, 342, 348; Divine Kings (Atas), grisly practices of, 338-339
 Igbirra, Ata of, 289, 315, 337
 Igbirra people, 337
 Ikoku, Alvan, 204
 Illo, 93-95, 98, 135
 Ilorin, xiv, 48, 88, 117, 239, 283-284, 343-346, 376, 390; failure of local government reforms in, 345-346
 Ilorin, Emir Abdul Kadiri, 346
 Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP), 344-345; incompetence and corruption of, 346
 Imam. *See* Abubakar Imam
 Independence, demand for. *See* Self-government issue
 India, xiv, xv, 4, 23, 108, 177, 222, 274-275, 305-306, 314
 Indirect rule (Lugard System), 45-46, 53-55, 150, 208, 344
 Information Service, Northern, 302, 367
 Intelligence system. *See* Security and Intelligence Organization
 Institute of Administration, 286-287, 353, 355
 Ironsi, Major Aguyi (later Major General), 325, 399, 400, 402
 Isa Kaita, 292, 335, 386
 Islam, 40-42, 46, 52, 81-83, 140-141, 209, 213, 240, 244, 246, 254, 273-274, 332, 335, 339, 344, 372, 400; comes to Hausaland, 40; comes to Bornu, 246. *See also* Muslims; Law, Muslim

Jangali (cattle tax), 92, 193-194
 Jebba, 49, 153

- Jeffries, W. F., 234
 Jinns, 192
 Johnston, Carol, 171
 Johnston, H. A. S. (Tim), 384
 Joint Council (of House of Chiefs and House of Assembly), 227
 Jos, 129, 271, 279, 308, 323, 333-334, 390
 Jos Plateau. *See* Plateau, Jos
 Judges (British Courts of Justice), 19, 282-285
 Jukun tribe, 238, 338

 Kabba Division, 337
 Kabba, Obaro of, 337
 Kabba Province, 139, 283-284, 289, 315, 335-341, 343
 Kachia, 102, 104
 Kadiriya (Islamic brotherhood), 327-331
 Kaduna, 49, 63, 95, 100, 104-105, 109, 119, 129, 133, 173, 175, 181, 187-189, 191, 195, 202, 208, 226, 233, 236-237, 242, 251-252, 267, 270-271, 275, 292, 298-299, 302, 306, 308, 310, 312-313, 315-316, 320-321, 326, 330, 340, 342, 344, 347-349, 352, 360-361, 374, 379-381, 384-386, 390, 398-399, 400, 401, 439
 Kaduna Capital School, 380-381, 390
 Kaduna River, 49, 127-128, 318
 Kalgo, 98
 Kamba, 79
 Kanem-Bornu Empire, 246
 Kanemi dynasty, 247
 Kano, 23, 40, 43, 47, 53, 59, 68, 107, 109-111, 117, 132-135, 138, 147, 169, 198, 200-225, 227, 236, 265, 278-279, 281-283, 289, 299, 302, 306, 308, 310, 312, 317, 323-324, 326, 328-329, 337-338, 377, 384, 391-392, 399, 402, 438-439; conquest by Fulani, 43; development in early 1950's, 201-202; elections, 1951, 222-225; extremists stir up trouble, 278-279, 326; falls to British, 44; General de Gaulle's visit, 138; mythological origin, 40; proposed Flying Club, 108-110; riots, intertribal, 267, 275; royal visit, 323, 325; seeds of strife, 205-206, 217-219; Tijaniya, zealots in, 328-329
 Kano, Chiroma of (later Emir, Sir Muhammedu Sanusi), 207, 220, 273, 280-281, 289, 292, 309-310, 312, 314, 323-324, 326, 328, 350, 377, 386, 391; acceptance of administrative and judicial reforms, 279-280; strong actions against extremists, 280-281
 Kano, Emir Abdullahi Bayero, 132, 205-207, 220, 227, 269, 273, 279, 328
 Kano Flying Club, projected, 108-110, 121
 Kanuri language, 251, 438
 Kanuri people, 246, 249, 253, 314
 Kaolack, Sheik Ibrahim. *See* Ibrahim Kaolack
 Kashim, Shettima (later Sir Kashim Ibrahim), 228, 250, 253, 255, 257, 291, 389, 398, 400, 434
 Katab, District Head Ja'afaru. *See* Zaria, Emir Ja'afaru
 Katsina, 42, 57, 62-64, 147, 180, 265, 291, 329, 439; "Home Guards," 147
 Katsina College (later transferred to Kaduna), 115, 120, 141, 155, 174, 189, 195, 250, 438-439
 Katsina, Emir Muhammedu Dikko, 62-64, 88
 Katsina, Emir Usuman Nagogo, 167, 385, 403
 Katsina, Hassan, Major (later Brigadier, Military Governor of Kaduna), 400-401
 Kaura Namoda, 59-61
 Kazaure, 201
 Kebbi, 42, 69-85, 112, 181
 Kebbi River, 70, 94, 381

- King, Cecil Harmsworth, 298
 Kipling, Rudyard, xiv, 9, 164, 272
 Kirk-Greene, A. H. M., vii, 302, 429, 436
 Kontagora, 123-125, 127, 129, 161, 173, 315
 Kontagora, Emir Ibrahim, 123
 Kontagora, Emir Umaru Maidubu, 123, 126, 152, 315
 Kontagora, Emir Umaru Nagwamatse, 123
 Koran, 71, 114
 Kumba, 7
 Kuria, 59-61, 64
- Lagos, 3-5, 19, 23, 34, 36, 48-49, 79, 87, 108-110, 119, 122, 131-133, 138, 156-157, 159-161, 163-164, 168, 175-177, 185-186, 190, 203, 210, 215-216, 231, 239, 258, 260-261, 265, 267-269, 271-272, 274-275, 281, 291, 298, 301, 307, 312, 315, 348, 351, 360-361, 364-365, 379, 385-386, 392, 394, 396, 398, 399-402, 404, 407
 Lagos Youth Movement, 157
 Lamido, Chief of Adamawa. *See* Adamawa
 Lancaster House, 366, 375, 379
 Larymore, Constance, vi
 Law, customary, 157, 369
 Law, British common, 157, 283, 369
 Law, Muslim, 40, 46, 114, 283, 334, 369-373; conflict between Muslim law and British conception of justice, 370; inequitable operation against non-Muslims, 335, 370; removal of Administrative Officers' powers of review, 370
 League of Nations, Mandate of 1922, 7, 27, 248
 Lebanon, people of, 310
 Legislative Council (later House of Representatives), 119, 151, 154, 159, 163, 165, 167-168, 175, 198, 203, 216
 Letchworth, T. E., 253, 256-257
 Lethem, G. J. (later Sir Gordon), 248
 Lennox-Boyd, A. T. (later Lord Boyd), 296-297, 356-358, 366
 Lewis, Professor Sir Arthur, 406-407
 Libya, 372
 Lieutenant Governors, position of and responsibilities, 90, 92, 107, 221, 225-226, 231-232, 240, 254, 260, 276, 279
 Literacy campaign. *See* Adult education campaign
 Lloyd-Morgan, D. H., 212
 Local government. *See* Ministry of Local Government; Native Administration
 Lokoja, xiii, xiv, 139, 336-339, 341, 379
 Lot, Pastor David, 292, 343
 Lugard, Sir Frederick (later Lord Lugard), vi, xiii, xiv, 5, 39, 44-45, 49, 56, 123, 127, 138, 155, 169, 177, 208, 248, 251, 344, 354, 437
 Lugard System. *See* Indirect rule
 Lugard Hall, 198, 231, 323
 Lynn, John, 393
 Lyttelton, Oliver (later Lord Chandos), 236-237, 277, 281, 296
 Lyttelton, Lady Moira, 236-237
- Macaulay, Herbert, 156-157, 159
 Macintosh, Professor J. P., viii, 395
 Mackenzie, Dr. D. J. M., 318, 378
 McLennan (construction engineer), 59-60
 Macmillan, Harold, 286

- Macpherson, Sir John, 109, 177-178, 181, 210, 215, 261, 264, 271, 275, 284, 287, 299, 300, 317, 344, 360, 434
- Macpherson, Lady, 177-178, 299
- Macpherson Constitution. *See* Constitution No. 2, Macpherson
- Maddocks, K. P. (later Sir Kenneth), 210, 223, 291, 307, 354, 382, 434
- Mahaukata* (the madmen), right wing extremists, 278-280, 309
- Mahdi, 51-52
- Mai (Bornu title), 246
- Maiduguri, 136, 234, 248-250, 252, 256
- Maimalari, Brigadier, 299
- Maitama Sule, 212
- Makaman Bida, Aliyu (Makama), 120, 162, 163, 166, 218, 227, 234-235, 275, 296, 303, 335, 380-381, 432, 441
- Makurdi, 301
- Malam, definition of, 46
- Mamfe, 7, 8, 11-14, 17-18, 20, 35
- Mansfeld, Dr., 20
- Mant, R. O., 338
- Manyemen, 10-11
- Maradi, 57
- Marc, R. C., 378
- Marine. *See* Nigerian Marine
- Marketing boards, 202
- Marshall, H. H., 281, 284, 286, 306-307, 367, 382, 434
- Marshall, Sir Hugo, 260, 435
- Mason, P., 305
- Matthew, J. W., 379
- Medical and Health Services, xiv, 12, 25, 105, 111-112, 126, 153, 169, 187-189, 211, 234, 266, 302, 318, 335, 378, 408
- Messengers, Government, 25, 26, 89; *See also* Hassan Messenger
- Michie, C. W., 191, 345-346, 384
- "Middle Belt" movement, 347, 365; dislike of Muslim law, 334-335; origin of expression, 332; reasons for disquiet, 332-335
- Middle Zone League, 217, 333
- Midwest Region, 393-395, 399, 404
- Military Governors, 400-401
- Military government, federal and regional, vii, 391, 400-401
- Milne, Lt. G. H. (later Lieutenant Colonel), 53
- Milverton, Lord. *See* Richards, Sir Arthur
- Mines. *See* Tin mines
- Ministers, Eastern Regional, 260, 356-357, 394, 396
- Ministers, federal (Central), 227-228, 260, 263-264, 312, 360, 396, 399-400
- Ministers, Northern Regional, 221, 227, 231-233, 237-239, 252, 258-261, 266, 286, 292-294, 298, 306-307, 309-312, 319, 321, 333, 335, 349, 351, 354-355, 367, 374-376, 378-380, 383, 385, 400
- Ministers, Western Regional, 260-261, 357, 396
- Ministries, Northern Region (new model), formation and evolution, 378, 382-383
- Ministry of Education, 335, 380
- Ministry of Local Government, 232, 240, 286, 346
- Ministry of Works, 232
- Minna, 116, 123, 127-130, 134, 149, 153, 160-162, 168, 173, 186, 190
- Minorities, 367, 375, 404
- Missions, Christian. *See* Christian missions
- Modibbo Adamawa. *See* Adamawa, Lamido Modibbo Adama

- Moiser, Dr., 52
 Mokwa, 118
 Moman Eha, 64-66, 390
 Moors, traces of in Sokoto Province, 78-79
 Moral Re-Armament, 277
 Morgan, W., 101
 Mounted Levies, 139-140
 Mounted Infantry, 51, 90, 138
 Muffet, D. J., 193-194, 196-197, 341, 391, 436
 Muhammedu Sanusi. *See* Kano, Chiroma of
 Muhammedu Ribadu. *See* Ribadu, Muhammedu
 Muhammedu Sokoto, 198
Mukaddam (a deputy), 328, 330
 Musa Dagash, 251-252, 254
 Musa Gashash, 314
 Muslims, xiv, 5, 52, 59-60, 68, 71, 81, 86, 100-101, 104, 108, 140, 165, 190, 204, 213, 232, 237-238, 241, 259, 264, 273, 275, 282, 300, 303-304, 314, 324, 327, 329, 332-335, 341-344, 362, 365-371, 437-438; fanatics, 51-52, 82-84. *See also* Islam
 Muslim courts. *See* Law, Muslim
- National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), 167-168, 260, 262-263, 267, 272, 284, 358, 360, 363, 392-394, 396; alliance with NPC, 392; backs NEPU, 283; campaign for revision of constitution, 159-160; derides Northern leaders, 276; first tour in North provokes strong opposition, 160-163; founded, 159; joins other groups to form United Progressive Grand Alliance, 394; left wing expels moderate Ministers, 260; strained relations with Governor, 356-357
 National Emergency Committee, 216
 Native Administration (local government), 103, 134, 166, 210-211, 213, 232, 243, 276, 309, 330, 349, 351-352; as originated by Lord Lugard, 45-47; attacked as being behind the times, 208-210; Cameron reforms, 101-102, 120; district and village councils, 184, 287; increased responsibilities, 353-354; effect of independence on, 390-391; Sole Native Authorities, 240. *See also* Indirect rule
 NA Police (Yan Doka). *See* Police, Native Administration
 Native Courts Ordinance, 283
 Native Treasuries, 45, 46, 95, 98, 125
 Nelson, St. E. D., 214, 341, 436
 Niger Colony. *See* Colonie du Niger
 Niger Company. *See* Royal Niger Company
 Niger Constabulary. *See* Royal Niger Constabulary
 Niger Province, 115-120, 122, 149-150, 153, 156, 160-161, 168-169, 175, 194, 341, 343
 Niger River, xiii, xiv, 41, 49, 76, 78-80, 93-97, 109, 116, 123, 125, 128, 132, 135, 140, 173-174, 181, 237-238, 246, 259, 275, 289, 330, 332, 336-337, 390-391; trade and transport on, 79, 109, 173-174, 336-340, 379, 390
 Nigeria, xiv, 3, 7, 13, 120, 131, 133, 154, 156, 258-259, 262-263, 265, 288, 299-300, 316-317, 318, 325, 349, 360, 362-365, 367-368, 374, 396, 399, 404-408, 438, 441; dissolution of Federation and abolition of regions, 402; division into twelve states, 343, 367-368, 407; first effects of independence, 390; independence celebrations, 389; a republic, 389; unifying effect of royal visit, 325
 Nigeria Regiment (after 1956 the Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment, referred to after independence as the Nigerian Army), 25, 27, 49, 51-52, 57, 90, 104, 108, 121, 122-124, 129, 131-134, 139-140, 147-148, 247, 270-272, 320, 322, 360, 365, 385, 386, 391-392, 396-403
Nigerian Citizen, 297-298, 301
 Nigerian Democratic party, 156

- Nigerian Marine, 336
 Nigerian National Alliance, 394
 Nigerian National Democratic party, 394
 Nigerian Navy, 396
 Nigerian Railway. *See* Railway, Nigerian
 Nigerian Youth Movement, 157-158
 Nile River, 39, 41, 52, 84, 117, 246
 Niven, C. R. (later Sir Rex), 228
 Njoku, Eni, 260, 263, 435
 Nkrumah, President, 393
 Non-Muslims, 101, 210, 217, 237, 238, 273, 276, 303, 304, 319, 332-335, 341-344, 351, 365, 369-372, 438. *See also* Christians; Pagans
 Non-Muslim League, 333
 Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), 217-220, 223-225, 278-280, 282-283, 311, 326-328, 330; riotous and provocative behavior by, 278-279, 326-327
 Northern Nigeria (also referred to as Northern Provinces, Northern Region, the North), xiv, xv, 4-5, 7, 20, 22, 25, 27, 36, 39, 48, 52, 86, 101, 107, 114, 116-117, 119-120, 134, 139-141, 148-150, 154, 156-157, 159-162, 167-168, 171, 175, 181, 185, 187, 190, 194-196, 203-204, 209, 211; Northerners, 213, 215, 221, 226, 236, 242, 251, 258-259, 269-275, 277, 283, 287-289, 292, 295, 297, 300-303, 305-307, 311, 313, 316-317, 324, 327-328, 332, 334, 336, 347-349, 354-355, 360, 363-372, 375, 382, 385, 389-395, 400-401, 403-404, 407-408, 437-441
 Northern Nigeria, Protectorate of, xiii, 4, 264
 Northern People's Congress (NPC), 218, 223-225, 227, 232, 241, 262, 310-311, 333, 344-346, 359-360, 363, 374, 391-394; adopts "One North" slogan, 223; agrees to demand independence for Nigeria, 362-365; alliance with NCNC, 392; becomes popular Northern political party, 217; breaks with NCNC, 394; demands central agency on lines of East African High Commission, 276-277; dominates Federal House, 393; founded, 195; lacks financial and press backing, 217, 304; militant wing gives trouble, 278, 304-305; new elements meddle in NA and native court affairs, 309; opposes self-government in 1956, 276; Tiv revolt against, 391
 Northern leaders (including chiefs and other non-political leaders), 162-166, 175, 216, 237, 243, 258, 284, 291, 349, 363, 371. *See also* Northern People's Congress
 Northern Progressive Front, 394
 Northern Region Communications Flight, 301, 308, 335, 379
 Northern Regional Council, 165
 "Northernization," 295-296, 401
 Nupe, 116-120, 332
 Nupe, Etsu. *See* Bida, Emir of
 Nwapa, A. C., 260
 Nzeogwu, Major, 398-401

 Offa, 48
 Officials. *See* Civil servants
 O'Hara, Father, 153
 Ojukwu, Lieutenant Colonel, Military Governor, Enugu, 404
 Okene, 337, 338
 Okotie Eboh, 399
 Okpara, Dr. M., 394-395, 399, 435
 Ollivant & Co., G. B., 212
 Olivier, V. F., 182
 Onyeama, Charles (later Judge), 204
 O'Sullivan, Major J. J., 308, 393
 Oyo, 344

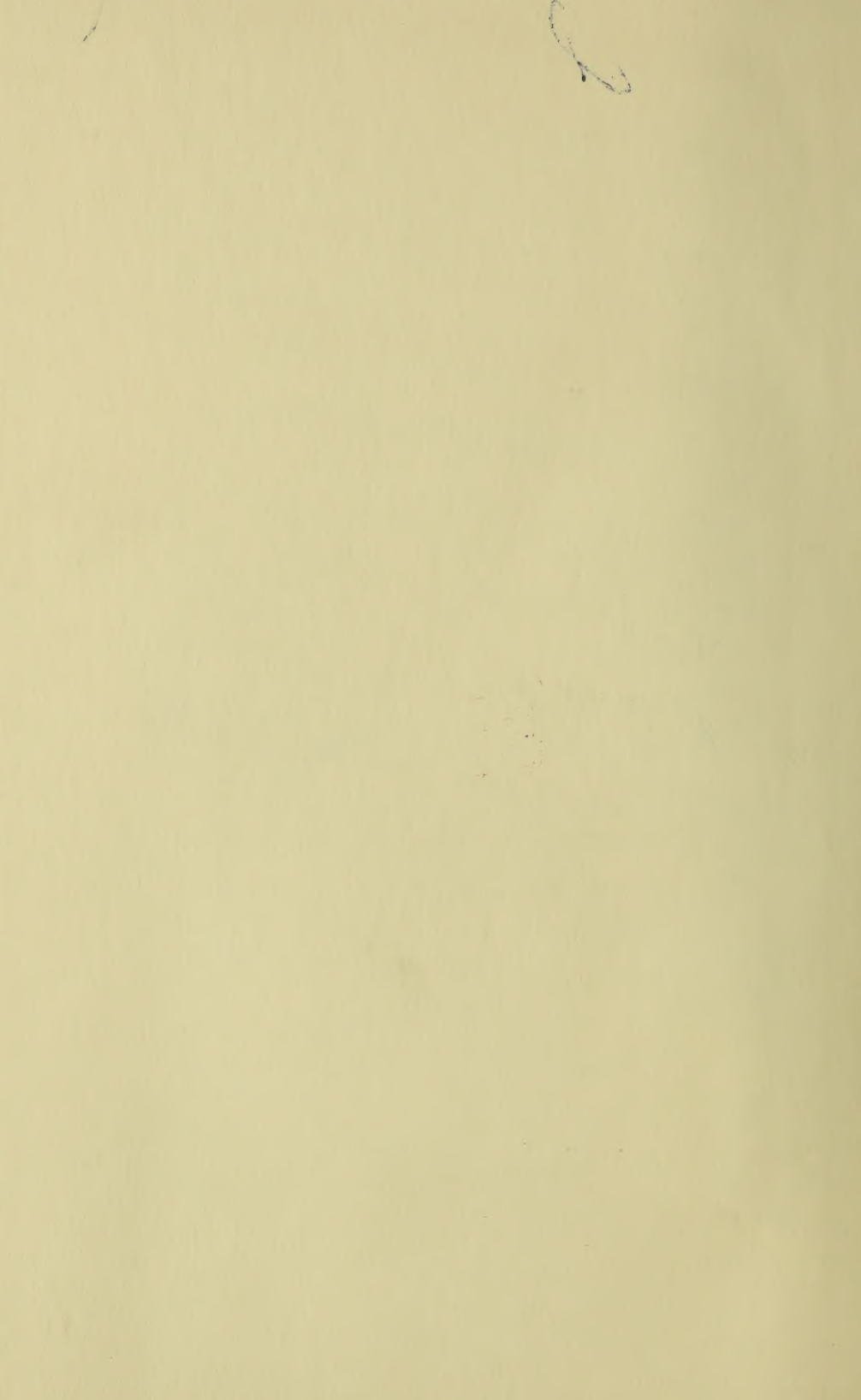
- Pagans, xiv, 42, 47, 71, 101-103, 120, 123-124, 128, 140, 146, 166, 238, 241, 244, 252, 332, 334, 344, 348, 365
- Pakistan, 222, 275, 324, 364, 371, 379
- Palmer, Sir Richmond, 63-64, 66, 248, 435
- Pam, Lieutenant Colonel Jack, 399
- Pant, Apa P., 222
- Panyam Fish Farm, 302
- Parliamentary democracy, effect of in Nigeria, 406, 408
- Paterson, Miss A. M., 323
- Patterson, H. F., 379
- Patterson, J. R. (later Sir John), 109, 168, 379, 435
- Peebles, A. C. C., 317, 319
- Perham, Margery (later Dame Margery), vii, 170-171, 297
- Permanent Secretaries, 252, 294-295, 383-384, 400-401
- Philip, Prince, Duke of Edinburgh, 316-317, 320-321, 324-325
- Phillipson, Sir Sidney, 203, 440
- Pidgin, 22
- Pilgrimage, Holy, 84, 257, 314, 328, 379
- Pilot. See West African Pilot*
- Plantation Light Railway. *See* Railway, Plantation Light
- Plateau, Jos, 104, 129, 146, 217, 237, 242, 292, 302, 333-334, 343, 390
- Pleass, Sir Clement, 186, 260, 356, 358, 360, 435
- Police, British officers, 256, 269, 271, 284, 308, 408
- Police, Native Administration (Yan Doka), mounted and foot, 90-91, 113, 129, 178-179, 196-197, 269, 274, 319, 321-322, 324-326, 334, 381, 398
- Police, Nigeria, 11, 19, 28-29, 31-34, 47, 60, 62-63, 90, 131, 203-204, 245, 252, 269-274, 308, 319, 325-326, 360, 365, 367, 385, 396, 398-399, 405
- Police, traditional. *See* Dogarai
- Port Harcourt, 49
- Pott, D. A., 210-212, 268, 270-271, 273, 305, 384
- Premier, Northern Region, position of, 277, 286, 291, 307, 319, 366, 367, 382
- Premiers, Eastern and Western Regions, 367
- President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, 389, 395, 396
- President, House of Assembly, 203
- Price, Major T. R. (later Brigadier), 29, 435
- Pridie, Sir Eric, Medical Adviser to Colonial Office, 378
- Prime Minister, Federal, position of, 363, 364, 367, 374, 384, 386, 392, 394-398
- Private Secretaries to Ministers, 277
- Privy Council, Northern Region, 292, 366
- Provincial Secretaries (Senior civil servants in Provinces after independence), 401
- Public Services, regional, 277, 302, 362, 401
- Public Service Commission, 292
- Public Works, Department of (also NA Works), 5, 46, 93, 130, 147, 169, 173, 187, 201, 232, 238, 318, 378
- Purdy, R. J., 212, 269, 273, 274
- Rabeh, 246-248
- Rafih, 195
- Railway, Nigerian, 48-49, 58-59, 128, 145-146, 186, 195, 200, 202, 265-266, 336, 390
- Railway, Plantation Light, 6
- Rankine, Sir John, 360, 435
- Research Office, Kano, 133, 138, 147
- Residents. *See* Administrative Officers, British
- Residents' Conference, 129

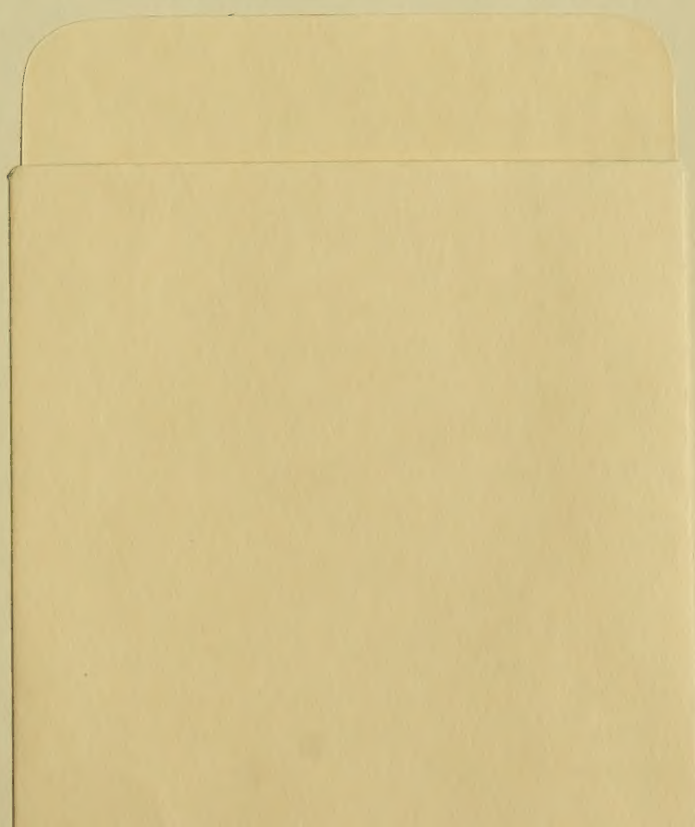
- Ribadu, Muhammedu, 228, 244, 312
- Richards, Captain H. U. (later Brigadier Ricardo), 57-58, 131, 133, 139, 435
- Richards, Sir Arthur (later Lord Milverton), 108, 149, 154, 164, 177, 203, 435
- Richards Constitution. *See* Constitution No. 1, Richards
- Right wing extremists. *See* *Mahaukata*
- Riots and public disorder, 196-197, 267-275, 278-279, 326, 330, 338, 395-396
- Roads, 35-36, 50, 70-71, 75-79, 93-98, 108, 136, 151-152, 175, 226, 244, 334-335
- Robertson, Sir James, 300, 360, 365, 372, 384-385, 389, 435
- Rodd, Captain F. R. (later Lord Rennell), 132-133
- Royal Air Force, 109, 135
- Royal Navy, 135
- Royal Niger Company, xiii, xiv, 233
- Royal Niger Constabulary, xiii
- Rumbelow, W. E., 319
- Ruxton, Major U. F. H., 7-8, 13, 36, 176
- Ruxton, Mrs., 8, 17
- Rwang Pam. *See* Birom, Chief of
- Sabon Gari, Kano, 265-274, 280, 326
- Sahara, 78, 133, 246
- Sakkwato. *See* Sokoto
- Sama'ila of Argungu. *See* Argungu, Emir Sama'ila
- Sardauna, the title, 91
- Sardauna of Sokoto Abubakar. *See* Sarkin Musulmi Abubakar
- Sardauna of Sokoto Ahmadu (later Sir Ahmadu Bello), 196, 234, 238, 250, 263, 277, 286, 301, 307, 315, 317, 319, 321, 325-326, 331, 335, 348-349, 354-355, 366, 368, 371-372, 374-377, 380-381, 383, 385-386, 389-391, 394, 432; appointed member of House of Assembly, 192; appointed Minister of Local Government, 241; appointed Regional Minister, 227; clashes with chiefs, 310-312; clash with Awolowo at House of Representatives, 264; differences with Sultan, 190-191; difference with author over Permanent Secretaries, 383-384; first Pilgrimage, 314; impulsive outbursts, 303-304; installed as Premier of North, 291; murdered, 398; personality and background, 115, 146; presents Loyal Address to Queen, 323; reconciliation with author, 313-314; religious conversion campaigns, 400-401; talk of a Northern breakaway, 275; views on Northernization, 296
- Sarkin Musulmi (Commander of the Faithful) of Sokoto: Abubakar (Sultan, later Sir Abubakar, first mentioned as Sardauna Abubakar), 91, 113, 115, 146, 149, 165, 168, 175, 178-179, 188-192, 196, 198, 227-228, 240, 288, 309-311, 319, 328-329, 331, 334, 381, 385, 403, 431; Abubakar Atiku, 69; Hassan (Sultan), 69, 111, 113; Muhammedu Attahiru I, 45, 69; Muhammedu Attahiru II (first to receive title of Sultan), 52; Muhammedu Bello, 43, 69, 328, 390; Muhammedu Tambari (Sultan), 56, 63, 66, 68-69, 111; Shehu Usman dan Fodio (first Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto), 42-44, 55, 69, 99, 160, 227, 244, 246, 264, 288, 327
- Satiru, 51-52
- Sayyid Muhammed Abu Rannat, 372
- School of African and Oriental Studies, 277
- Schools. *See* Education in Northern Nigeria
- Scott, P. G., 300-301, 307, 354, 382-383, 436
- Secretariat, 3, 5, 122, 165, 341, 350, 352
- Secretary of State for the Colonies, 107, 236-237, 277, 357-358, 366-368, 371, 440.
See also Lyttelton, Oliver; Lennox-Boyd
- Secretary to the Premier, position of, 383-384
- Security and Intelligence Organization, 307-309, 330, 398
- Self-government issue, vii, 168, 216, 235-236, 262-264, 276, 286, 293, 362-365, 367-

- Williams, D. M., 215, 297-298
 Williams, C. V., 228, 317
 Williams, F. D. K., 305
 Williamson, T. B., 215, 296-297
 Wilson, Dr. S. C., 378
 Witchcraft, 10-11, 16-19, 68-69, 71-72, 83
 Woodward, D. C., 186
 Works. *See* Ministry of Works; Public Works
 Wraith, R. E., 171
 Wreford, C. K., 244-245
 Wrench, H., 185
 Wright, D. B., 341
 Wukari, Chief of, 238

 Yabo, 184
 Yan Doka. *See* Police, Native Administration
 Yahaya, Emir of Gwandu. *See* Gwandu, Emir Yahaya
 Yahaya Ilorin, 238-239
 Yauri, 173-174
 Yauri, Emir Abdullahi, 173-174, 178, 180, 315
 Yauri, Emir Tukur (earlier referred to as Tukur Yauri), 174, 277, 315
 Yelwa, 173-174, 277, 315, 390
 Yobe River, 138
 Yola, 243
 Yoruba people, 116-117, 157-160, 165, 194-196, 238, 264-266, 284, 332, 344-345, 363, 367, 399
 Yorubaland, 48, 159, 344
 Yunfa, King of Gobir, 42

 Zamfara, 42-43, 55, 57, 113, 180, 329-330, 390
 Zaria, 43, 49, 58, 100-106, 108, 117, 133, 160-161, 189, 195, 265, 271, 286, 291, 311, 321, 329, 341, 343, 380, 391, 402, 438
 Zaria, Emir Ibrahim, 103-106
 Zaria, Emir Ja'afaru (first mentioned as District Head, Katab), 102-106, 228, 309-311, 321
 Zik. *See* Azikiwe, Dr. Nnamdi
 Zinder, 134
 Zobeir Pasha, 246
 Zungeru, 49, 79, 127, 169
 Zurmi, 62
 Zuru, 124, 365





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